

Radiation Effects During Angiography

About your procedure and possible risks

This handout explains what angiography is, how it is done, and possible risks and side effects.

What is angiography?

Your doctor has asked you to have a procedure that uses *angiography*. Angiography uses X-rays to look inside or treat blood vessels.

How is it done?

A doctor who is an expert in angiography will do your procedure. This doctor will puncture your skin at a safe spot to reach a blood vessel. *Catheters* (long plastic tubes) will be threaded through this blood vessel to the right area. The doctor will use X-ray images to guide the catheters.

Are there risks?

There are small but real health risks from this procedure. The doctor who will do your procedure has explained these risks to you.

We believe that these risks are small compared to the benefits you can gain from having this procedure. Please ask for more information if you have questions or concerns.

Are there side effects?

In most procedures, the chance of harm is very small. But, radiation from X-rays can cause serious side effects.

One possible side effect is injury to the skin that was exposed to the radiation. This is called a *radiation burn*. Signs to watch for include:

- Skin redness
- Rash
- Hair loss

You might see these signs 2 to 4 weeks after your procedure. They usually fade with time. Very rarely, a radiation burn is serious and needs to be treated.



Talk with your doctor if you have any questions or concerns about the possible side effects of your procedure.

How should I follow up?

Your doctor will show you what area of your skin to look at. If you are not sure where to look, please ask.

Check for side effects 2 to 4 weeks after your procedure:

- Ask a family member or friend to look at your skin that was exposed to radiation.
- If you see any skin changes, call the doctor who did your procedure or your primary care doctor as soon as possible.

Questions?

Your questions are important. Call your doctor or health care provider if you have questions or concerns.

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