

Neurosurgery

Cerebral Angiography - A guide for patients and carers

What is an angiogram?

An angiogram is an X-ray test that is used to make pictures of blood vessels. A cerebral angiogram shows the blood vessels in your head and neck.

What happens before the test?

- You may already be an inpatient, or if not, you may be admitted into hospital either on the Neurosurgical ward or the surgical day unit on the day of the test.
- You will not be allowed to eat for up to 4 hours before the test. Only clear fluids may be taken until 1 hour before the procedure.
- The nurse will complete a checklist for the procedure.
- You will be asked to wear a gown for the procedure and anti-embolism stockings.
- For this procedure, you will be required to shave both sides of your groin (this can be done before admission.)
- A doctor will review your medical history and will explain the test to you.
- The doctor will then ask you for your consent for the test.
- The doctor will also need to take a blood sample from you to send to the laboratory.
- You will then be taken to the X-ray department.



What happens during the test?

- You will be taken into a room with large, high technology equipment.
- There will usually be at least 3 people in the room during the procedure - the radiologist, the radiographer and the nurse.
- You will be transferred onto the table in the room. The nurse will put sterile towels over you and clean an area in your groin.
- The radiologist will put some local anaesthetic in your groin so you will not be able to feel what is going on. The radiologist will then put a very small tube (catheter) into the blood vessels in your groin. This is passed through the other blood vessels in your body until it reaches your neck. (You will not feel it moving inside you).
- The radiologist will then position the tube into different blood vessels in the neck. During this time, injections of a special dye, known as a contrast agent, are given to provide more detailed images. These injections may give you a general warm feeling, but this goes away quickly.
- Before taking the pictures, the radiographer will move the equipment around you to the correct position. Pictures are taken during further injections.
- It is very important that you remain still during this process to make sure the best possible pictures can be taken. The whole procedure is likely to take at least 1 hour.
- If an abnormality of the blood vessels is found during the test, this information will be given to the consultant in charge of your care. Your consultant will then discuss the treatment options available to you.

What happens when the test is finished?

- Once all the required information has been collected, the radiologist will remove the tube from your groin. The point where the tube was inserted will be pressed on for up to 10 minutes to seal it and stop any bleeding.
- After any bleeding has stopped, you will be transferred back onto the bed and taken to a room to recover.
- You will then be collected by a trained nurse from the Neurosurgical Unit or surgical day unit and taken back to the ward.

Patient Information

- On the ward, the nursing staff will regularly monitor your vital signs, including the site where the catheter was inserted into your groin.
- Following your test, you are required to lie flat for 4 hours. You will then be discharged from the hospital on the same day as your procedure and the results will be discussed at your next outpatients appointment.
- It is also advised that you drink plenty of fluids after the procedure.

Staff in the radiology department

Radiologists: These are doctors specially trained to interpret angiograms. They will write a report on your examination, which will be sent back to the specialist who referred you for the scan.

Radiographers: These individuals control the equipment during the procedure. They have done special training to work in all areas of the department and to use the imaging equipment.

Radiology nurses and Neuro-radiology nurses: These nurses help radiologists during the more specialised procedures.

For further information or clarification on any aspect of the test please contact the **Neurosciences Unit Ward 43** on Tel: 024 7696 7802 or 024 7696 5330.

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Patient Information

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