

Neuroradiology

Cerebral Angiogram

Information for patients



What is an angiogram?

An angiogram is a procedure which shows blood vessels on X-rays. Normally blood vessels do not show up on ordinary X-ray examinations. A special dye called 'contrast medium' is used to make the arteries and veins visible.

In a cerebral angiogram, a catheter (fine plastic tube) is guided through the blood vessels from the groin to the brain. Contrast medium is then injected through the catheter into the blood vessels of the brain while X-rays are taken.

Who will be doing the angiogram?

A specially trained doctor called a radiologist will carry out the angiogram. These doctors have special expertise in using X-ray and scanning equipment. They are also skilled at reading and understanding the images produced.

Where will the angiogram take place?

You will need to come to the Neurosciences ward before your angiogram. This is on Level 2 of the West Wing at the John Radcliffe Hospital.

The angiogram itself will take place in the Neuroradiology (X-ray) department on Level 1 of the West Wing, at the John Radcliffe Hospital.

What will happen on the ward when I arrive?

The staff on the ward will help you to get ready. You will be asked to put on a hospital gown, and the procedure will be explained to you. You will be able to ask questions at any time about any part of the procedure.

The staff on the ward will go with you to the Neuroradiology department where you will be greeted by the staff of the angiography room.

What happens during the angiogram?

During your procedure you are looked after by radiologists, nurses and radiographers.

- You will be asked to lie down on the X-ray table and blood pressure and pulse monitoring equipment will be attached to your arm.
- The skin over your groin will be shaved.
- The radiologist and one or more of the nurses may wear theatre gowns and gloves to keep everything as sterile (clean) as possible.
- The skin over your groin will be cleaned with antiseptic and you will then be covered with a sterile sheet up to your chin.
- The skin over your groin will be anaesthetised (made numb) with local anaesthetic.
- A small needle will gently be inserted into the blood vessel.
- A guide wire is placed through the needle and then a small catheter is slipped over the guide wire into the blood vessel.

The radiologist uses X-rays to guide the catheter and guide wire through the blood vessels into the right position. The contrast medium (special dye) is injected through the catheter and X-rays are taken to show the blood vessels.

Several series of X-rays are taken until the radiologist is satisfied that the images show all the information needed. The catheter and guide wire are then removed. The doctor will press on this area of your groin for at least ten minutes to stop any bleeding.

How long will it take?

Every person is different so it is not easy to predict how long the angiogram will take; it may be one hour or longer.

What happens afterwards?

You will be taken back to the ward on a trolley or bed. You will need to stay on the bed in the ward for about six hours to be monitored. The nurses on the ward will carry out routine observations such as taking your pulse and checking your blood pressure. They will also look at the skin entry point where the catheter was put in, to make sure there is no bleeding from it. If you feel unwell or have any concerns after your angiogram please speak to a member of staff.

If you recover well from the procedure, you will usually be allowed to go home or to return to your ward (if you are an inpatient) later on the same day.

Results of the angiogram

The radiologist will study the X-rays taken during the angiogram and send a written report to the doctor who referred you for this examination. This doctor will then contact you to give you the results.

When you return home

If you feel unwell after you have returned home, you will need to call the Neurosciences ward to speak to a member of staff. You will be given a leaflet with contact details for this ward when you are discharged home.

If you have a specific requirement, need an interpreter, a document in Easy Read, another language, large print, Braille or audio version, please call **01865 221 473** or email **PALSJR@ouh.nhs.uk**

Judith Grant, Senior Radiographer
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Neuroradiology department
Oxford University Hospitals NHS Trust
Oxford OX3 9DU
www.ouh.nhs.uk/patient-guide/leaflets/library.aspx

