

*If you have any questions or concerns, please call the Cath Lab at 312.926.CATH (2284).*

## Right Heart Catheterization

A right-heart catheterization (cath) is a procedure that measures the pressures inside of your heart and main blood vessels in your lungs. It looks at how well your heart is able to pump blood to your body.

During the procedure, a thin catheter (tube) is inserted into a vein either in your groin or the side of your neck. It is slowly passed into the right side of your heart and your pulmonary artery where the pressure measurements are taken. You will feel little or no pain, and the test lasts less than 1 hour.

This brochure will explain what to expect before, during and after the procedure.

### Before the procedure

The Cardiac Catheterization Lab (Cath Lab) nurse will contact you about 1 week before the procedure. The nurse will answer your questions, review the pre-cath guidelines and review your current medications with you. Please tell the nurse about:

- Allergies
- Blood thinner medication
- Diabetes medication

### Night before the procedure

The night before the procedure, do not eat or drink anything after midnight.

### Day of the procedure

The day of your procedure, take only the medicine the nurse has instructed you to take. This medicine should be taken with small sips of water. On the morning of your procedure, do not take any *oral* diabetes medication.

### Arrival

Please check in on the 8th floor of Galter Pavilion at 675 North Saint Clair Street. Parking is available for patients and visitors in the garage at 222 East Huron Street, across from the Feinberg and Galter pavilions. Check in at the Reception Desk on the 8th floor. For a discounted rate, please bring your parking ticket with you. Tickets can be validated at the Customer Services Desk on the 1st, 2nd and 8th floors of the Feinberg and Galter pavilions.

For their own safety, children under the age of 16 may not be in the testing area. They may stay in the waiting room with a responsible adult.

## What to expect

You will be assigned a room for your pre- and post-procedure care. After you change into a hospital gown, the nurse will review your health history and take your blood pressure, pulse and temperature. You also will have blood tests. An IV (into the vein) line will be inserted into your arm or hand. The IV will be used for fluids and medicines needed during the procedure. If your groin area is to be used, it will be cleaned (and shaved, if needed).

The physician will discuss the procedure with you. After the physician has answered your questions, you will be asked to give your written consent for the test.

You may wear glasses, dentures (or bridgework) and hairpieces. You will be asked to empty your bladder just before going into the procedure room.

## During the procedure

Once you come into the Cath Lab, you will be helped onto a firm X-ray table. The room will have a camera and several TV monitors. Medicine may be given to relax you through your IV line. You may feel drowsy, but usually you will be awake and comfortable during the test. The area around the puncture site will be cleaned with a special soap that may feel cold. An anesthetic (numbing medicine) will be injected into the area. A needle will be inserted into the vein and the catheter will be guided into position. This is not usually painful. You may feel pressure and mild discomfort at the puncture site. If needed, more numbing medicine may be given.

## After the procedure

After returning to your room, you will need to lie flat in bed. You will be on bed rest for 1 to 2 hours, depending upon which site (the groin or the neck) has been used for the procedure and if you received any relaxing medicine. If relaxing medicine is given to you during the procedure, you will have to remain in bed for 2 hours.

Once your bed rest is over, the nurses will help you sit up and walk. After the physician discusses your test results and checks your puncture site, you may be discharged.

## At home

It's important to know how to take care of yourself at home as you recover from your cardiac cath. Carefully follow these guidelines.

### **Activity**

While your wound is healing, bleeding or swelling can occur as a result of stress or strain to the groin and abdominal muscles. Please remember:

- On the day of discharge, limit your activity
- Do not drive for 24 hours
- Showering as usual is OK the following day

- Do not take tub baths for 1 week
- For the first 2 days, climb stairs (as needed) with a slow, steady pace

You may resume your usual activities the day discharge, but please avoid these activities for 1 week:

- Heavy lifting (more than 10 pounds)
- Strenuous physical exercise such as tennis, running, swimming, golfing, weightlifting or bicycling
- Sexual activity

### ***Wound care and healing***

After the procedure, a small dressing is applied to the wound site. You may remove the dressing the next day. Do not reapply a dressing. Keep the site clean and dry. Avoid lotions, ointments or powders at the wound site for 1 week.

The healing wound should be soft and dry. A bruise (black and blue) or a marble-sized lump may be present.

## **Warning signs and symptoms**

### ***Wound changes***

Please contact your physician or the Cath Lab physician if any of these signs appear:

- Skin redness around the wound
- Drainage from the wound
- A lump at the puncture site that enlarges or is larger than a marble
- Pain at the puncture site that makes walking difficult
- Numbness or tingling in the thigh or leg
- Calf tenderness or pain
- Increased area of the bruising extending into the thigh, over the buttock or into the groin
- Discoloration or coolness of the leg or foot

### ***Chest pain and other symptoms***

Please notify your physician **right away** if you have:

- Chest discomfort or pain (angina) that radiates to your neck, jaw or arm
- New symptoms or a change in your pattern of angina
- Nausea or profuse sweating
- Shortness of breath with exertion
- An irregular heartbeat
- Lightheadedness or dizziness that makes you lie down
- A fainting spell

**Call 911 or go to the nearest emergency department if you have:**

- Chest discomfort or pain lasting longer than 10 minutes that is not relieved by taking 1 nitroglycerin tablet under the tongue
- Frequent, recurring episodes of chest discomfort or pain

***Bleeding***

If you notice bleeding or oozing from the puncture wound, please:

- Immediately lie flat.
- Apply firm pressure just above the puncture site and hold the firm pressure for 15 minutes. You may use a clean cloth or tissue to apply pressure. If possible, have another person apply the pressure.
- After 15 minutes, remove the pressure. The wound should be dry, flat and not bleeding. You should continue to lie flat for about 1 hour before getting up and walking.
- Cover the wound with an adhesive bandage. Tell your physician about this incident.

**Call 911 or go to the nearest emergency department if you have:**

- Minor bleeding that lasts for more than 15 minutes
- Swelling that seems to be increasing

**Cath Lab contact**

Please call if you have any problems or questions. Don't hesitate!

**Weekdays:** 312.926.CATH (2284), extension 3; (TTY: 312.926.6363)

**Weekends, evenings and holidays:** Ask for the Cath Lab physician on call