

# Cardiac Catheterization

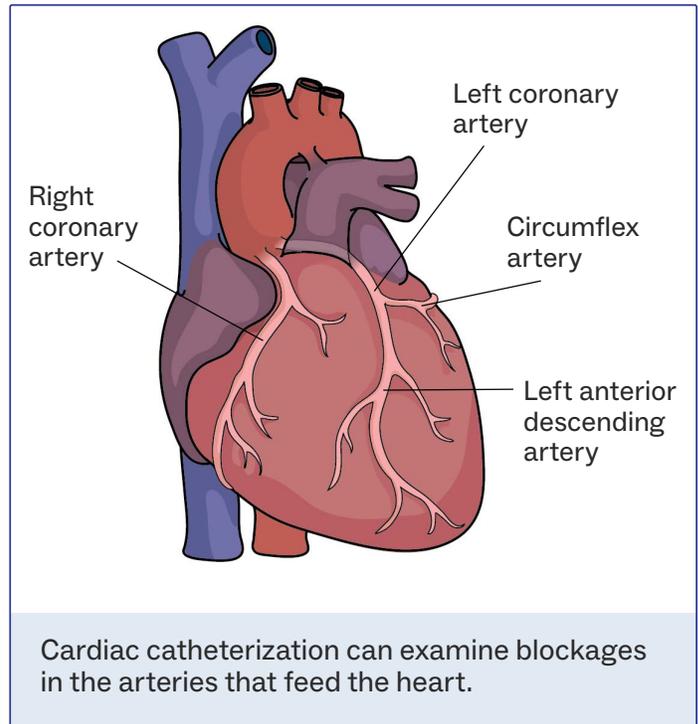
## What is it?

Cardiac catheterization [kath-eh-tah-reh-ZAY-shun] is a procedure that helps your doctor see how well your heart is pumping, check the arteries that feed your heart, and examine your heart valves. It may also be called cardiac catheterization, heart catheterization, or an **angiogram**.

During the procedure, your doctor inserts a long, flexible tube called a **catheter** into a blood vessel in your groin, arm, or wrist. The catheter is then moved through the blood vessel to your heart.

## Why do I need it?

- **Cardiac catheterization gives your healthcare providers detailed information about your heart.** It is used to evaluate problems that keep the heart from functioning well, such as heart failure or valve disease. It is also used to diagnose **coronary artery disease (CAD)**. CAD is the narrowing of the arteries that supply blood and oxygen to the heart.
- **Cardiac catheterization can help your doctor diagnose and prevent problems.** Angiography helps your doctor diagnose the problem so it can be treated before it causes any more damage.



## Talking with your doctor

The table below lists the most common potential benefits, risks, and alternatives for this procedure. Other benefits and risks may apply in your unique medical situation. Don't be afraid to ask questions or talk with your doctor about your concerns.

Possible benefits	Risks and possible complications	Alternatives
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Useful information for diagnosis. Cardiac catheterization gives your doctor more detailed information than other tests.</li> <li>• Faster recovery. The procedure doesn't require a major incision (cut) or general anesthesia (medicine that makes you sleep).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leg numbness or weakness for a few hours after (rare)</li> <li>• Bleeding or infection where the catheter was inserted (rare)</li> <li>• Bad reaction to the contrast dye (very rare)</li> <li>• Reduced kidney function (kidney failure in rare cases). Tell your doctor or the imaging technician if you have kidney disease or diabetes</li> <li>• Exposure to x-ray energy, which can slightly increase your lifetime cancer risk (for more information, see Intermountain's Guide to Understanding Radiation)</li> <li>• Damage to the artery or heart muscle (extremely rare)</li> <li>• Heart attack or stroke (extremely rare, and not typically caused by the procedure itself)</li> <li>• Unforeseen complications</li> </ul>	<p>Cardiac catheterization is the best way to get accurate information about your arteries or heart valves. Other tests include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Electrocardiogram</li> <li>• Cardiac stress test</li> <li>• Cardiac CT scan</li> <li>• Cardiac MRI</li> </ul>

