

# Your Congenital Cardiac Catheter

Information for patients



## Cardiac catheters

There are lots of different procedures that can be carried out using a cardiac catheter. A cardiac catheter involves inserting a small tube (called a catheter) into a blood vessel, usually at the top of the leg, and this is then guided into to your heart through your blood vessels. X-rays are used to take pictures and sometimes a dye is also used.

You may need a cardiac catheter for diagnostic purposes - which means the doctors are assessing your heart and taking some measurements to see how well your heart works.

You may need a cardiac catheter for some type of intervention such as closing a hole or to put in a stent or to stretch or replace a valve. Your doctor or nurse can talk you through your specific procedure if you're not sure.

## What are the potential risks of the procedure?

Having a cardiac catheter test involves having tubes passed into your heart, so you can imagine, there can be times when complications occur. Your cardiologist will discuss these in detail with you, for your specific case, before you sign the consent form but serious complications generally occur in less than 1 in 1000 cases.

### *These include:*

- heart attack,
- stroke,
- kidney damage,
- death,
- a severe allergic reaction to the dye and
- damage to the blood vessels in your leg or heart.

Having a general anaesthetic can carry small risks in itself.

Your cardiologist will help you understand the balance of risks against the benefits to your heart and health in the long term.

## Before your procedure

You may need to stop taking some medication before your procedure e.g. anticoagulants like warfarin or rivaroxaban.

You may need to start certain medication before some procedures. You will be told this in advance.

You should not have anything to eat from midnight for morning procedures or 06.30am for afternoon procedures. Your letter will tell you what time this is for you. You can drink clear fluids for up to two hours before your procedure.

**Please bring all of your medication with you into hospital.**

Please bring an overnight bag with pyjamas, dressing gown, slippers and toiletries. You can use your mobile phone on the ward if you wish although we cannot accept any responsibility for lost or stolen property. Wi-Fi is available.

Carefully shave your groin on both sides the day before your procedure (the ward staff can do this if you prefer) and shower at home on the morning.

## The day of the procedure

You will need to call ward L14 on the morning of your procedure to check they have a bed for you. When you get to the ward you may have to wait in the waiting area until a bed becomes available.

You will usually have signed the consent form at clinic and an anaesthetist will come to see you on the ward.

The nursing staff will complete some paperwork with you. It may be necessary to perform some routine blood tests before your procedure. You may also need an ECG and the ward staff will routinely test you for a bug called MRSA by taking swabs of your groin, underarms and nose.

You will be given a hospital gown and some disposable underwear to wear for your procedure.

You may have to wait some time for your procedure on the day, so your patience is appreciated.

When it is time for your procedure you will walk around to the catheter lab with a member of staff.

## The procedure

Once you're in the catheter lab the staff will make sure you're comfortable on the trolley and you will be attached to some equipment so you can be monitored during the procedure.

Most procedures are done under general anaesthetic for your comfort. The anaesthetist will give this to you and you will go to sleep.



*The catheter lab*

**Note.** Occasionally we can perform the procedure with a local anaesthetic. If you are having a local anaesthetic, during the test, you can sometimes feel some extra heart beats, this is quite common. Sometimes, the dye used can give you a hot flush and you may get a funny taste in your mouth, but this passes within a few seconds.

When you're asleep the doctor will clean the skin over the blood vessel they will use. Sometimes, particularly if you have had lots of catheters or operations in the past, the veins and arteries can be scarred and difficult to find. Occasionally we will need to use your other leg, your elbow, wrist or neck instead.

When the procedure has finished you will be taken to the recovery area to be woken up and there will be a nurse with you. You may feel drowsy and nauseous, this is normal.

## **After your procedure**

You may have been given blood thinning medication during the procedure so it is normal for the entry site on your groin to bleed a little.

Pressure will be applied to the groin to help stop the bleeding and you should try to keep your leg still.

You will have to lay flat for around one hour. You can then sit up but you must stay in bed for around four hours. After this you can start mobilising. Sometimes you may have to lay flat for longer and you may need a device to help stop the bleeding.

You may be kept on a cardiac monitor overnight.

As soon as you feel able, you will be able to eat and drink.  
The nurses will check on you and your wound regularly.

## Discharge advice

You can usually go home the next day. You may need some further investigations before you can be discharged such as an ECHO, chest X-ray, ECG and urine dip test. We will aim to discharge you by late morning but this depends on your investigations. Please ask someone to collect you.

You can usually re-start your anticoagulant medication on the same day as the procedure but your doctor will advise you on this.

Please avoid strenuous exercise, heavy lifting, vigorous walking or house work for three days. This is to prevent bleeding at the top of your leg.

For certain procedures the DVLA state you should not drive for four weeks, ask your doctor or nurse if this applies to you.

You should not need more than one week off work depending on your job. Sick notes can be provided if necessary.

Showering/bathing - avoid long baths for the first few days and please avoid vigorous washing or drying of the wound.

Your groin may be a little sore, paracetamol should be adequate. It is normal for the site to be bruised and there may be a small lump under the skin.

Observe the wound for signs of infection like oozing, swelling, redness and becoming more tender or hot to touch. If it starts bleeding once you're at home apply pressure and telephone

for advice. Please also telephone for advice if your leg becomes discoloured or cold to touch or you experience “pins and needles”. People you can telephone for advice include the Nurse Specialists, your GP or 111.

If you are concerned about your breathing, colour, or if there is excessive bleeding from the wound, please call 999 for an ambulance. You will be taken to your nearest accident and emergency unit for assessment.

A letter will be sent to you and to your GP outlining your procedure and the outcome. You will be seen in clinic around six weeks after your procedure depending on the procedure performed.

The Congenital Heart Disease Nurse Specialists are available by email or telephone Monday to Friday, 8am-4pm.

## General Information

### Ward L14 is on E Floor in Jubilee Wing.

The majority of the patients on ward L14 are people who require procedures for acquired cardiac disease e.g. stents after a heart attack. The staff are very experienced in looking after people with congenital heart disease too.

**Visiting times are 12-8pm and there is a maximum of two visitors allowed per bed.**

We have accommodation for relatives which is provided by the charity Take Heart - if this is required, please ask the nursing staff and a room will be provided if one is available.

Children may only visit at discretion of the nurse in charge.

## Useful Contact Details

### **Dr Thomson & Dr Bentham Secretary:**

0113 392 8184

### **Ward L14:**

0113 392 7414

### **Congenital Heart Disease Nurse Specialists:**

0113 392 8154

email: leedsth-tr.achdnurse@nhs.net

### **Specialist Cardiac Congenital Intervention Nurses:**

0113 392 5058

### ***See our website:***

***[www.leedscongenitalhearts.com](http://www.leedscongenitalhearts.com)***