



Coming in for a diagnostic coronary angiogram

You are on the waiting list to have a coronary angiogram at the Royal Berkshire Hospital. This leaflet outlines information and advice you should follow to help understand this procedure.

What is a diagnostic coronary angiogram?

A coronary angiogram is a specialised X-ray test to find out detailed information about your coronary arteries (major blood vessels). The test will give us precise information about your heart's blood supply, allowing us to better understand (diagnose) your condition and the most effective way of treating it.

Why do I need a coronary angiogram?

The three main reasons for carrying out this test are:

- **Confirming your diagnosis** – to find out for certain whether your symptoms are because of a problem with the blood supply to your heart.
- **Guiding your treatment** – to see whether your symptoms are best dealt with by tablets or can be more effectively treated with angioplasty and stent (a balloon stretch of a narrowed artery with a metal stent placed to keep the artery open) or even a bypass operation.
- **Ensuring your safety** – to be certain that the blood supply to your heart is not so restricted that it would be life-threatening without treatment.

What are my treatment options?

The cardiologist (heart doctor) who carries out the angiogram will discuss the results with you later in the day, before you go home. Our specialist nurses will also be happy to answer any questions and explain your future treatment.

The angiogram may show that your arteries are clear or that you are fine just to continue with medication. In some cases, the findings may suggest that you might be helped by an angioplasty procedure, or that a bypass operation is the best treatment for you.

What are the risks of having a coronary angiogram?

You may feel an occasional 'missed' or 'extra' heartbeat during the procedure. This is normal and is nothing to worry about. You should expect to feel a little sore for a day afterwards and you may experience some bruising.

The test is very safe, however, there are possible complications associated with this procedure:

Minor risks

- Damage to the radial or femoral artery.
- Developing abnormal heart rhythms.
- Worsening of kidney function if this is already abnormal.
- Allergic reaction to contrast dye.

Major risks

- Damage to one of the coronary arteries causing it to narrow or block (less than 1 in every 500 patients).
- Having a stroke (less than 1 in every 500 patients).
- Death (less than 1 in every 1000 patients).

You will have the opportunity to discuss any risks or concerns with the doctor on the morning of your test before you give consent.

You should not drive after the procedure so please make sure you arrange for a responsible adult to accompany you home. We recommend that people do not drive or go back to work the day after the procedure.

Before the procedure

The coronary angiogram will be carried out in the Jim Shahi Unit on Level 1 Battle Block at the Royal Berkshire Hospital. Information on car parking and the layout of the hospital is included in the Getting to the Royal Berkshire Hospital leaflet. If someone is accompanying you, they will be asked to contact the ward later in the day to find out your estimated time of discharge.

You can eat and drink as normal.

Please wear one layer of light clothing over your underwear, e.g. T-shirt or short-sleeved shirt or blouse and casual trousers/jogging pants. Please ensure this garment is plain, free from metal attachments or design and not valuable, as it may get damaged during your procedure. You may remain in this clothing throughout your stay. Women are required to remove their bra.

Please bring any regular medication in its original packaging with you.

If you are taking Warfarin or 'blood thinners', you will be advised what to do about this before the procedure.

If you are taking **diuretics (water tablets)**, **do not take any on the morning of the procedure.** If you are taking tablets for diabetes, you may continue to take these on the morning of admission with the exception of Metformin, which must be stopped 48-hours before and 48-hours after the procedure. If you use insulin, please continue as normal. **Please tell the staff if you are on insulin as soon as you arrive at your appointment.**

Other tablets can be taken as normal.

Tell the nurse if you have allergies or if there is a chance that you are pregnant.

The Jim Shahi Unit is an emergency department and there may be unforeseen delays. Please bring something to read or occupy your time.

On arrival, a nurse will check your name and details. We will tell you again what will happen during the procedure and the doctor will ask you to sign a consent form. Your nurse will accompany you to the catheter laboratory (where the angiogram is carried out).

What happens during the procedure?

We will ask you to lie on the X-ray table and monitoring leads will be attached to your arms and legs to watch your heart rate. The nurse will clean your skin with antiseptic and cover you with sterile towels. The doctor will inject some local anaesthetic, into your wrist or groin, which will make the area sting to begin with, but will then go numb. You may feel a pressure as the catheters (tubes) are put into position. You may also experience a warm feeling when the contrast (dye) is injected. The X-ray machine will move in different positions to take the films. The whole procedure takes 20-30 minutes.

If you experience any discomfort or are worried about anything during the procedure, please tell someone straight away. Sedation and analgesia is available if required.

After the procedure

If the procedure is performed in the arm, you will return to the ward with a pressure band around your wrist. You can eat, drink and mobilise straight away.

If it is performed in the groin, the nurse will either remove the tube from your artery or press the site for about 10 minutes to stop the bleeding, or alternatively, a collagen plug is used to stem the bleeding. The nurse will check the wound site frequently, and will monitor your pulse and blood pressure. The nurse will encourage you to walk around and to drink plenty of fluids to flush out the dye used during the procedure. If you notice any bleeding from the wound site, you should tell someone straight away. Provided all is well, you will be able to go home later in the day.

Follow up

Once the cardiologist (heart doctor) has discussed your results with you (before you go home), you will have more idea of what future treatments, if any, you will need. Then, if necessary, a further appointment will be made for the relevant treatment.

Useful contacts

Royal Berkshire Hospital	0118 322 5111
Jim Shahi Unit	0118 322 6502
Cardiac Appointments	0118 322 6676
Cardiac Support Nurses	0118 322 6638
Cardiac Care Unit	0118 322 6684
NHS 111:	111
NHS website:	www.nhs.uk
British Heart Foundation:	www.bhf.org.uk

This leaflet is printed privately for the Cardiac Fund. It was set up in 1976 for the purpose of providing cardiac services that would otherwise not be available through National Health resources. Our Cardiac Laboratory was largely equipped through the fund and many other areas in the Department have also benefited from equipment and staff training.



If you would like to contribute please scan the QR code below to donate direct to the fund online, alternatively, cheques should be made payable to:

The Royal Berks Charity Cardiac Fund U226

Royal Berks Charity

Royal Berkshire NHS Foundation Trust London Road

Reading RG1 5AN Telephone 0118 322 8860 www.royalberkscharity.co.uk



To find out more about our Trust visit www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk

Please ask if you need this information in another language or format.

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