

Imaging department

# Having a cerebral angiogram

## Information for patients, relatives and carers

### Introduction

This leaflet is designed to provide information about your cerebral angiogram procedure and answer any questions that you may have.

### What is cerebral angiogram?

A cerebral angiogram is a diagnostic procedure that uses an X-ray to examine the blood vessels in the brain.

The images from this procedure will help identify any abnormalities in the blood vessels and is useful to plan further treatment.

The procedure is usually performed under local anaesthetic by an interventional neuroradiologist in our imaging department.

During the procedure, the neuroradiologist will insert a short tube into one of the arteries either in your wrist or in your groin.

A long thin plastic tube called a catheter is then carefully guided into the blood vessels that needs to be examined.

A contrast medium is injected through the catheter, which helps us to produce clearer x-ray images.

### What preparations do I need for the procedure?

Before your procedure, you will receive a phone call from a member the interventional neuroradiology team to complete a pre-procedure assessment.

This will help us to assess your general health and ensure it is safe to proceed with the planned procedure.

During the phone call, the staff member will ask you questions about your medical history.

You will need to provide us a list of medications you are taking or have taken. **If you are taking blood-thinning medications (eg Aspirin, Prasugrel, Warfarin), you will be given instructions on when to stop taking them. Please contact us if you are unsure.**

**You will be asked to not eat food or drink anything from midnight before your procedure.**

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You are allowed a few sips of water only up to 2 hours prior to your procedure. However, eating and drinking on the day of your procedure will cause delay, or even cancellation of your procedure.

You will also receive an appointment for a blood test before you have the procedure.

## What are the risks and benefits of a cerebral angiogram procedure?

Cerebral angiogram is a minimally invasive procedure, and recovery is usually quick.

The benefit of a cerebral angiogram is that it presents a very detailed, clear and accurate picture of the blood vessels in the brain.

However, like any procedure, there are still risks involved. These complications will be discussed with you by the interventional neuroradiologist.

Some of the risks of the procedure include:

- Allergic reaction to the contrast medium, which contains iodine.
- Small risks of infection at the puncture site. The procedure is done in sterile conditions, so the risk is minimal.
- Bleeding/bruising at the puncture site.
- Injury at the blood vessel.
- More serious complications, such as stroke, can occur, although extremely rare.

## What happens on the day of my procedure?

You will be admitted to the hospital on the morning of your procedure. The interventional neuroradiologist will meet you at the ward, and will discuss the procedure with you, and answer any questions that you may have regarding the procedure.

You will be asked to sign a consent form for the procedure, to ensure you have understood the risks and benefits before you agreed with the planned procedure. This may be done electronically.

Before you go to the imaging department for your procedure you will be asked to change into a hospital gown, remove any jewellery and hair pieces, and put on anti-embolic stockings.

Please do not to bring any valuables into the imaging department during your procedure.

You will then be taken to the interventional radiology department on a bed, where a staff nurse will meet you, check your details, and perform a clinical assessment.

Because we use x-rays during the procedure, if you are a patient of child-bearing age, you will be asked to complete a pregnancy test by providing a urine (wee) sample.

Once the pre-procedure checks are completed, you will then be taken to the angiography room. Safety checks will be done before we start the procedure.

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You will then be taken to the x-ray table, where you will be laid flat on your back. To reduce the chance of infection we will clean the area where we will insert the long tube (puncture area) with an antiseptic solution, and you will also be covered with sterile drapes.

The interventional neuroradiologist will inject local anaesthetic to numb the puncture area.

It is important that you remain still during the procedure so we can take the best x-ray images possible.

## What happens afterwards?

If you had your procedure done via the artery in your wrist, a compression device will be applied on the wound, and will remain and be monitored until bleeding has stopped. You may sit up on the bed or on the chair during this time.

If the procedure is done via the artery in your groin, you will need to stay on bed rest, and keep your lower limbs straight for 4 to 6 hours.

The nursing staff will monitor you, as well as your wound.

You may eat and drink as soon as you are able. You will be reviewed by the medical team and if you recover well, you will be discharged the same day.

## When can I get back to my normal routine?

You are not allowed to drive for 24 hours.

Please avoid any strenuous activities for 48 hours.

Keep the puncture site dry for 24 hours (avoid having a bath, shower or going to a swimming pool).

## What should I do if I experience any bleeding or swelling when I get home?

You may have a small amount of bruising where the catheter was inserted.

If you notice any bleeding and swelling from the wound, you should lie down and press hard on it, and go to your nearest accident & emergency (A&E) department as soon as possible.

## Will I need to visit the hospital again?

Yes. The interventional neuroradiologist will write a report from the procedure and review and discuss with your neurosurgery consultant and a multi-disciplinary team.

Frequently, the interventional neuroradiologist will discuss the results with you directly. We will arrange to have a follow up appointment with you after the results has been discussed by your doctors.

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## What if I cannot keep my appointment?

Please contact us as soon as possible. We can then offer the date to another patient and agree a new appointment date and time with you.

Please use the telephone number on your appointment letter.

## How do I get to the hospital?

Please visit the Trust's website for more information about travelling to our hospitals:  
[www.imperial.nhs.uk/our-locations](http://www.imperial.nhs.uk/our-locations)

## Contact details

Please do not hesitate to contact our imaging department if you have any queries or concerns:

**Charing Cross Hospital:** Fulham Palace Road, London W6 8RF

Telephone: **020 3313 0770**

Email: [imperial.neurointervention@nhs.net](mailto:imperial.neurointervention@nhs.net)

## How do I make a comment about my visit?

We aim to provide the best possible service and staff will be happy to answer any of the questions you may have. If you have any **suggestions** or **comments** about your visit, please either speak to a member of staff or contact the patient advice and liaison service (**PALS**) on **020 3312 7777** (10.00 – 16.00, Monday to Friday). You can also email PALS at [imperial.pals@nhs.net](mailto:imperial.pals@nhs.net) The PALS team will listen to your concerns, suggestions or queries and is often able to help solve problems on your behalf.

Alternatively, you may wish to complain by contacting our complaints department:

Complaints department, fourth floor, Salton House, St Mary's Hospital, Praed Street  
London W2 1NY

Email: [ICHC-tr.Complaints@nhs.net](mailto:ICHC-tr.Complaints@nhs.net)

Telephone: **020 3312 1337 / 1349**

## Alternative formats

This leaflet can be provided on request in large print or easy read, as a sound recording, in Braille or in alternative languages. Please email the communications team:  
[imperial.communications@nhs.net](mailto:imperial.communications@nhs.net)

## Wi-fi

Wi-fi is available at our Trust. For more information visit our website: [www.imperial.nhs.uk](http://www.imperial.nhs.uk)