



CARDIAC CATHETERIZATION

WHAT IS CARDIAC CATHETERIZATION

A cardiac catheterization or “heart cath” is a diagnostic x-ray procedure in which a soft narrow plastic catheter is inserted through the arm or upper leg and guided through a blood vessel to the heart. A special x-ray dye, called contrast, is then passed through the catheter. This allows your doctor to see the coronary arteries, chambers, and valves of the heart. This procedure is performed in the Heart Catheterization Lab.

You may have experienced chest pain, shortness of breath, palpitations or other symptoms which have led you to contact your doctor. These symptoms are suspicious of heart disease. Your doctor has already taken several steps in diagnosing the cause of your symptoms.

The best way your physician can determine the amount of blockage in the coronary arteries is to do a cardiac catheterization. During a cardiac catheterization, your doctor is also able to check the pumping action of the heart and see if the valves of the heart are opening and closing properly. After a cardiac catheterization, your doctor will be better able to recommend treatment for your heart disease.

Things you need to know:

Your doctor may order some lab work and a chest x-ray done before the day of your procedure.

Your doctor will give you instructions about taking your medications before your procedure. Generally, you will be asked to take all of your medications the night before and morning of your procedure. Your doctor may have special instructions about your diabetes medications or about any



medications that affect blood clotting. Please ask your doctor if you have any questions about which medications to take.

Please bring all of the medications you are currently taking with you when you come for your procedure.

If you are allergic to shellfish, iodine or x-ray dye, your doctor may order you additional medications to take before your procedure. It is very important that your doctor is aware of any of these allergies.

You are not to eat or drink anything except for sips of water with your medication after 12:00 midnight the night before your procedure unless your doctor has instructed you otherwise.

You will come to the hospital the morning of your procedure. A staff member from the Invasive Heart Lab will call you the night before your procedure to tell you what time to report in the morning.

On day of your procedure, you will report to the Cardiac Same Day Unit, which is located on the Lobby level of the Bedford Entrance of Aultman Hospital.

A heart cath usually takes about 2-2 ½ hours from the time the patient leaves the room until they return. The patient is then recovered and closely watched for any signs of bleeding.

Patients need to plan to be at the hospital for the entire day. We recommend having a designated family member or support person to stay with the patient for the night once they are discharged to home.