

Discharge Instructions for Cerebral Angiography



You had a procedure called cerebral angiography. This is an X-ray study of the blood vessels that supply your brain. During the procedure, the healthcare provider put a thin, flexible tube (catheter) into a blood vessel in your groin, arm, or neck through a small cut (incision). The provider injected contrast dye into your bloodstream to help take clear X-ray images. Here's what to do at home afterward.

Possible complications to watch for

The most common complication of this test is a collection of blood (hematoma) where the catheter was inserted. This is usually in the groin. It may appear as a lump under the skin. The medical staff usually notices this before you leave the imaging facility. A hematoma is treated by putting pressure on the site for a few hours to prevent it from getting bigger. You will be told to put cold packs on your groin for 24 hours to ease the pain. It takes a couple of weeks for the hematoma to heal. If the lump increases in size or is still present after 4 weeks, have it examined by your healthcare provider.

A less common complication is transient ischemic attacks (TIA) or a stroke. A TIA or stroke is caused by less blood flow to your brain. You might have weakness of an arm or leg, have trouble speaking and understanding words, or lose some vision or not remember things well. A TIA can last just a few hours. A stroke can last for days or weeks. Or be permanent. The older you are, the greater the risk for a TIA or a stroke after a cerebral angiography. You might notice these symptoms at the time of the test or after you have left the imaging facility, sometimes days later.

What to do at home

- Rest at home in bed for 12 hours, or as long as directed.
- Go back to your normal diet and take your regular medicines.
- Do only light and easy activities for 2 to 3 days.
- Drink 6 to 8 glasses of water a day. This will keep you from losing fluid. It will also help flush the X-ray dye out of your body.
- Don't drive until the day after your procedure.
- Don't do strenuous activity for 2 weeks. Don't lift anything heavier than 10 pounds for 3 to 4 days.
- You can shower the day after your procedure. But don't swim or sit in a bath or hot tub until your incision site has healed.
- Take your temperature and check your incision site for signs of infection every day for 1 week. Check for redness, swelling, or warmth at the site.
- Ask your healthcare provider when you can go back to work.

Call 911

A stroke is a medical emergency. Call 911 right away if you have any of the following symptoms of a stroke or TIA:

- Weakness, tingling, or loss of feeling on one side of your face or body
- Sudden double vision or trouble seeing in one or both eyes
- Sudden trouble talking or slurred speech

- Sudden, severe headache

B.E. F.A.S.T. is an easy way to remember the signs of stroke. When you see these signs, you know that you need to call 911 fast.

B.E. F.A.S.T. stands for:

- **B** is for **balance**. Sudden loss of balance or coordination.
- **E** is for **eyes**. Vision changes in one or both eyes.
- **F** is for **face drooping**. One side of the face is drooping or numb. When the person smiles, the smile is uneven.
- **A** is for **arm weakness**. One arm is weak or numb. When the person lifts both arms at the same time, one arm may drift downward.
- **S** is for **speech difficulty**. You may notice slurred speech or trouble speaking. The person can't repeat a simple sentence correctly when asked.
- **T** is for **time to call 911**. If someone shows any of these symptoms, even if they go away, call 911 right away. Make note of the time the symptoms first appeared.

When to call your healthcare provider

Call your healthcare provider right away if any of the following occur:

- Trouble breathing
- Dizziness
- Constant or increasing pain or numbness in your leg, arm, or neck
- Fever of 100.4°F (38°C) or higher, or as directed by your healthcare provider
- Signs of infection at the incision site, such as redness, swelling, or warmth
- Shortness of breath
- Leg feels cold or looks blue
- Bleeding, bruising, or a large swelling where the catheter was inserted
- Not enough urine or no urine

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