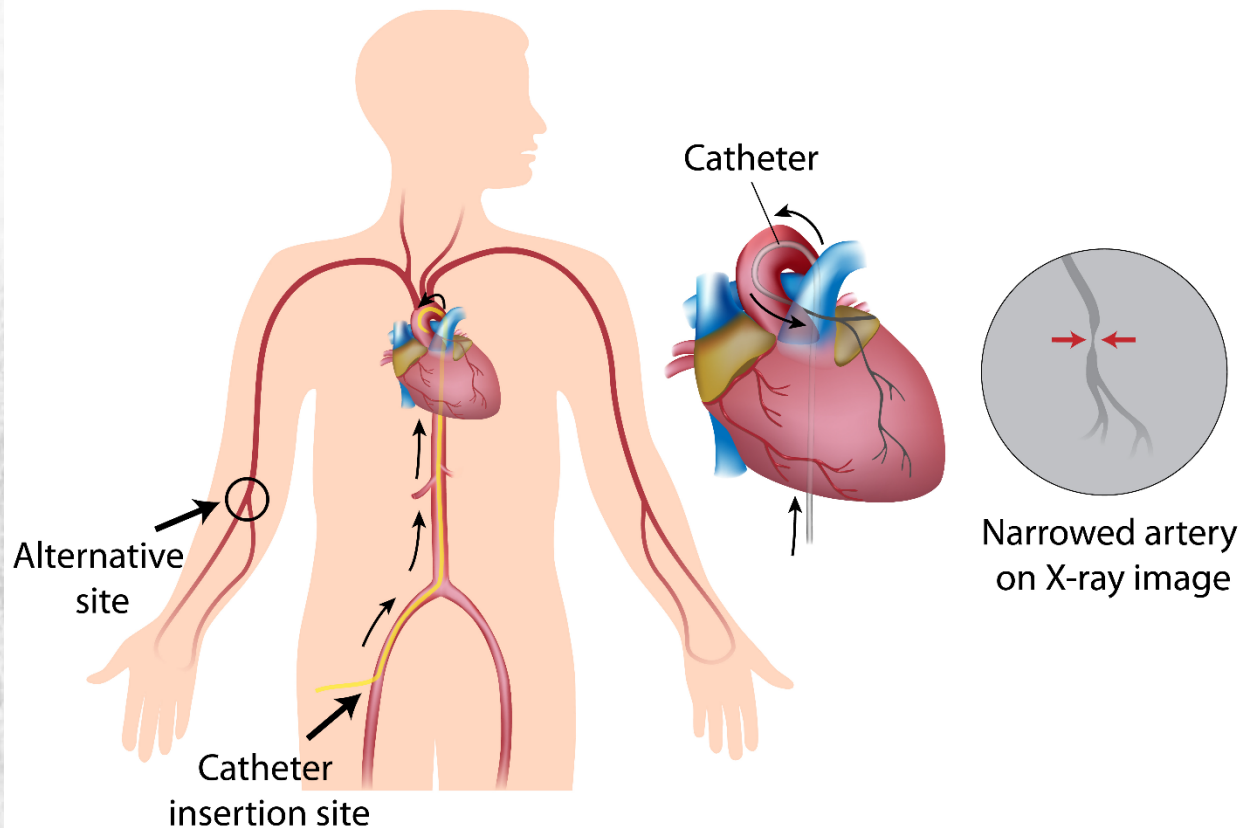


Cardiac Catheterization



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Cardiac catheterization is a procedure to examine how patent your coronaries are. A thin, hollow tube called a catheter is inserted into a large blood vessel that leads to your heart. Cardiac catheterization rarely results in serious complications.



What is the purpose of cardiac catheterization?

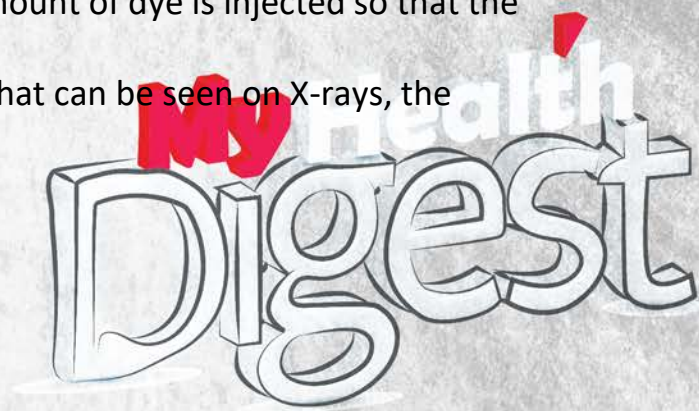
- To locate coronary arteries that were narrowed or blocked due to plaque buildup;
- To perform an arterial angioplasty to open up narrowed or blocked segments of an artery;
- To measure the oxygen content in the four chambers of your heart;
- To locate congenital defects in the cardiac valves or between heart chambers;

Risk Factors:

Cardiac cath is usually very safe. A small number of people have minor problems. Some develop bruises where the catheter had been inserted (puncture site). The contrast dye that makes the arteries show up on X-rays causes some people to feel sick to their stomachs, get itchy or develop hives.

How it is performed:

1. The patient is injected with a local anesthetic to numb the needle puncture site.
2. A long thin tube (called a catheter) is inserted into the patient's blood vessels through the groin or arm.
3. The catheter reaches the arteries of the heart.
4. A video screen will show the position of the catheter as it is threaded through the blood vessels and to the heart.
5. When the catheter is in place, a small amount of dye is injected so that the coronary arteries can be seen more clearly.
6. When a catheter is used to inject a dye that can be seen on X-rays, the procedure is called angiography.



When you should see the doctor after the procedure:

After one week to make sure that the wound is healing properly;

- If you notice any bleeding near the catheter insertion site;
- If you experience unusual pain, swelling, redness, or other signs of infection near the catheter insertion site;
- If your feet feel cold or turn blue.

