

# CT Angiogram

A CT angiogram is a procedure to look at the blood vessels in various areas of the body. For this procedure, a large X-ray machine, called a CT scanner, takes detailed pictures of blood vessels that have been injected with a dye (*contrast material*).

A CT angiogram allows your health care provider to see how well blood is flowing to the area of your body that is being checked. Your health care provider will be able to see if there are any problems, such as a blockage.

## Tell a health care provider about:

- Any allergies you have.
- All medicines you are taking, including vitamins, herbs, eye drops, creams, and over-the-counter medicines.
- Any problems you or family members have had with anesthetic medicines.
- Any blood disorders you have.
- Any surgeries you have had.
- Any medical conditions you have.
- Whether you are pregnant or may be pregnant.
- Whether you are breastfeeding.
- Any anxiety disorders, chronic pain, or other conditions you have that may increase your stress or prevent you from lying still.

## What are the risks?

Generally, this is a safe procedure. However, problems may occur, including:

- Infection.
- Bleeding.
- Allergic reactions to medicines or dyes.
- Damage to other structures or organs.
- Kidney damage from the dye or contrast that is used.
- Increased risk of cancer from radiation exposure. This risk is low. Talk with your health care provider about:
  - The risks and benefits of testing.
  - How you can receive the lowest dose of radiation.

## What happens before the procedure?

- Wear comfortable clothing and remove any jewelry.
- Follow instructions from your health care provider about eating and drinking. For most people, instructions may include these actions:
  - For 12 hours before the test, avoid caffeine. This includes tea, coffee, soda, and energy drinks or pills.
  - For 3–4 hours before the test, stop eating or drinking anything but water.

- Stay well hydrated by continuing to drink water before the exam. This will help to clear the contrast dye from your body after the test.
- Ask your health care provider about changing or stopping your regular medicines. This is especially important if you are taking diabetes medicines or blood thinners.

### **What happens during the procedure?**

- An IV tube will be inserted into one of your veins.
- You will be asked to lie on an exam table. This table will slide in and out of the CT machine during the procedure.
- Contrast dye will be injected into the IV tube. You might feel warm, or you may get a metallic taste in your mouth.
- The table that you are lying on will move into the CT machine tunnel for the scan.
- The person running the machine will give you instructions while the scans are being done. You may be asked to:
  - Keep your arms above your head.
  - Hold your breath.
  - Stay very still, even if the table is moving.
- When the scanning is complete, you will be moved out of the machine.
- The IV tube will be removed.

The procedure may vary among health care providers and hospitals.

### **What happens after the procedure?**

- You might feel warm, or you may get a metallic taste in your mouth.
- You may be asked to drink water or other fluids to wash (*flush*) the contrast material out of your body.
- It is up to you to get the results of your procedure. Ask your health care provider, or the department that is doing the procedure, when your results will be ready.

### **Summary**

- A CT angiogram is a procedure to look at the blood vessels in various areas of the body.
- You will need to stay very still during the exam.
- You may be asked to drink water or other fluids to wash (*flush*) the contrast material out of your body after your scan.

This information is not intended to replace advice given to you by your health care provider. Make sure you discuss any questions you have with your health care provider.