

Vascular angiography of the head i.e. carotid artery angiography

You are coming for a vascular angiography procedure of the head. The procedure requires both preparation and aftercare and therefore a place is reserved for you in the ward as well.

What is Carotid Angiography and what information can we get from it?

Carotid angiography refers to contrast imaging of the blood vessels in the head. The imaging procedure is to determine whether there are bulges, vascular malformations, constrictions, or blockages in the arteries. The examination is performed using X-rays.

How to prepare for the procedure?

- You will arrive at the hospital on the morning of the examination day according to the instructions you receive from the ward. Blood tests are taken for the procedure.
- Medication that affects blood clotting (**Marevan**) is stopped 3-4 days before the test with the consent of your treating physician to prevent the risk of bleeding. Diabetes medication- **Metformin**- does not need to be stopped before the procedure. However, the medicine may be stopped after the test if kidney function so requires. You may take other medicines as before with a small drop of water.
- The examination is performed with the help of X-rays, therefore any possibility of pregnancy must be determined before the examination. If you know you have x-ray contrast allergies or kidney conditions you should report this in advance.
- The examination is usually done through the femoral artery, therefore the skin of the groin folds should not have redness or a rash due to the risk of inflammation.
- Smoking is prohibited 24 hours before the test because it causes the blood vessels to constrict and can lead to failure of the test.
- Jewelry and watches should be removed from the area to be examined.
- You must fast from the morning of the examination day.

How is the procedure done?

The procedure is performed by a Radiologist and two Radiographers. During imaging, you are lying still on your back on the x-ray table. The procedure is performed under local anaesthesia. A thin plastic tube, or catheter, is inserted through the femoral artery into the area to be imaged, through which a contrast agent is injected and X-rays are taken at the same time. There is no pain sensitivity in the blood vessels, so moving the catheter in the blood vessel does not hurt. Injecting the contrast agent produces a sensation of warmth.

What about after the procedure?

- The procedure takes altogether 1 to 2 hours.
- After the examination, the catheter is removed and the injection site is closed by applying pressure.
- Bed rest after the procedure is 2-5 hours. If you are unable to remain lying on your back, the nurses will help you into another position. Raising the head and lifting the legs are prohibited.
- After the examination, you can eat and drink normally, unless there are other restrictions.
- You may go home on the day of the examination. At home, be mindful of the injection site for about 1 week. Physical exertion, saunas and hot baths should be avoided. When you go home, you will receive more detailed aftercare instructions from the ward. Instructions for arterial puncture post-treatment can be found <https://hoito-ohjeet.fi/OhjepankkiVSSHPEnglanti/Instructions%20for%20arterial%20puncture%20post-treatment.pdf>

Where do you get the results from the procedure?

The referring outpatient clinic or ward is responsible for communicating the results of the examination to you. Any subsequent procedures (e.g., closure of a cerebral artery bulge or malformation) are performed as planned at a different time.