



information

## Cardiac catheterization *Information for patients*

You have been scheduled for a cardiac catheterization. Your procedure is scheduled for:

\_\_\_\_\_.

Someone will call you the day before your procedure to tell you what time to arrive at the medical center.

Your procedure is on the **west campus** of the medical center. West campus parking is available in the Pilgrim Road Garage (entrance is on Crossover Street, which is reached via Pilgrim Road or Autumn Street), or in the 110 Francis Street Garage (Lowry Building Garage), located on the corner of Brookline Avenue and Francis Street (and also accessible via the Riverway). The person driving should bring the parking ticket into the hospital. He/she must pay before returning to the car. In addition, the ticket can be validated in the Farr Lobby for a reduced rate.

Please go to the Farr Building entrance at 185 Pilgrim Road. (See enclosed map.) Once you are in the Farr lobby, take a **left** at the gift shop and follow the signs for the Baker elevators. Take the **Baker elevators to the 4<sup>th</sup> floor**, where you will check in at the reception desk.

### What is a cardiac catheterization?

A cardiac catheterization is a procedure used to diagnose various types of heart disease. During the procedure, the physician will guide a thin plastic tube called a catheter through a blood vessel in your leg or arm and up to your heart to evaluate the chambers of the heart, the heart valves, and the coronary arteries. The physician will often inject a special dye through the catheter to look for blockages in the coronary arteries. If a blockage or narrowing is detected, the physician may offer you the option of opening this blockage with any number of techniques, including balloon angioplasty and stenting. At Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center, we perform over 5,000 cardiac catheterizations a year, including over 2,300 angioplasty procedures.

### Preparing for your procedure

- **Several days before your procedure**
  - If you take warfarin (Coumadin), your doctor will ask you to stop taking it several days before your procedure. If your Coumadin has not been stopped, please notify us at 617-632-7461. Some patients (such as those who have had certain types of heart valve surgery) need to stay in the hospital while they are stopping their warfarin. Your doctor will let you know if this applies to you.

#### **Call us if you have questions**

- Please call us at 617-632-7461 if you have any questions about these instructions.
- If you are going home the day of your procedure, a responsible adult must take you home. You may not go alone. Please make sure someone can stay with you overnight.

- Please continue to take other medicines your doctor has prescribed, including any aspirin, Plavix, Persantine, or Pletal, unless your doctor tells you otherwise.
- A nurse from the cardiology department will be contacting you the day before your procedure. The nurse will talk with you about your medical history and will ask you about your medications and any allergies you may have. Please have a list of your medicines, including the doses, ready. The nurse may give you further instructions on changes in your daily medications that may be needed before your procedure.
- Please tell the nurse if you have had any recent infections, fever, or chills, or if you have been taking antibiotics for any reason.
- The nurse will go over your preparations and answer any questions you may have.
- **The night before your procedure**
  - **Please do not eat or drink anything after midnight the night before your procedure. Do not eat or drink until after your procedure is over.**
- **The morning of your procedure**
  - Follow the instructions given to you by the nurse regarding what medicine to take and not to take on the morning of the procedure. You may have a small sip of water to swallow any medicine you may need. As noted above, you should not take warfarin (Coumadin). You should also not take diabetes pills. If you take insulin, you will be told how to adjust your insulin on the morning of your procedure.
  - If you use inhalers or nebulizers, use these according to your regular schedule. Please bring your inhalers with you to the hospital.
  - Please leave all valuables at home.
  - Please bring a list of your medicines with doses to the hospital. Include prescription and non-prescription medicines, vitamins, herbs, and supplements. Bring a list; do not bring the bottles themselves.

### **What to expect**

- Please be aware that you may have to wait for your procedure. Sometimes, the wait is prolonged. Although we will do our best to perform your procedure close to the estimated time you were given, our schedule often changes at the last minute due to emergencies. Your understanding is appreciated. Please plan to spend most of the day at the hospital. You will stay overnight if you undergo

angioplasty or stenting (explained below). In some cases, patients who do not have these procedures also need to stay overnight.

- When it is close to the time of your procedure, you will be taken to a holding area. To protect your privacy and that of all of our patients, visitors are not permitted in the holding area. You may have one family member with you when you meet your doctor and sign the consent form for the procedure; otherwise, your family members are asked to wait in our reception area until your procedure is over.
- In the holding area, you will change into a hospital gown. You will meet with a nurse and doctor who will talk with you about your medical history and go over the procedure with you. The risks and benefits of the procedure will be explained, and you will be asked to sign a consent form.
- The nurse will take your blood pressure and pulse, place an intravenous (IV) line in your arm, and draw any blood tests that may be needed.
- When it is time for your procedure, you will be taken to the procedure room. You'll be connected to monitors which will stay in place throughout the procedure. You may have oxygen delivered through your nose or mouth. The area where the catheter will go in will be shaved and washed with antiseptic and covered with a sterile sheet. The most common area for insertion is the upper thigh. The arm can also be used.
- You will receive sedative medicine through your IV before the procedure begins. The sedative will make you feel sleepy and relaxed, but you will still be awake.

Before the catheter is inserted, the doctor will numb the area with a local anesthetic. You will feel a pin prick and some burning as the local anesthetic is injected. As the catheter is placed, you may feel pressure but should not feel any pain.

- Although it is best to limit talking during the procedure, please do speak up if you have any concerns or if you are feeling any discomfort at all.
- During the catheterization, the doctors will obtain whatever measurements and pictures are needed. If you are having coronary angiography (examination of the coronary arteries), a dye will be injected through the catheter. X-ray pictures will then be taken by a camera that moves around you in order to get different views of your heart. You may also feel the table moving and notice the lights dimming. This is all normal.

- Based on the information obtained, the doctor will tell you exactly what he or she sees. Together, you will talk about treatment options that are available. This may include:
  - Treatment with medications only (as appropriate)
  - An interventional procedure, such as:
    - **Angioplasty** – inflating a small balloon inside a narrowed artery to reduce an obstruction
    - **Stent** – inserting a mesh-like tube that helps keep the artery open
  - Cardiac surgery

If an interventional procedure is recommended, this is often done while you are in the procedure room. You will remain awake but relaxed.

- The catheterization takes about one hour. If you are having an interventional procedure along with the catheterization, this can take an additional one-two hours.
- Once the procedure is done, a doctor or nurse will update your family on your status. If the procedure is taking longer than expected, we will try to keep your family informed.

### Recovery

If you had an interventional procedure, such as angioplasty or stent, you will be admitted to the hospital after your procedure. Your family may visit you in your hospital room. Usually, discharge occurs the following day at around noon, although the exact time of discharge is different for everyone.

If you did not have an interventional procedure, you will be moved to a recovery area after your catheterization is complete. You will stay on bedrest in this area between two and six hours. During this time, you will be observed closely by a team of trained cardiac nurses. While you are recovering, your family member or friend may visit for brief periods. We cannot allow extended visits or multiple visitors because of privacy regulations, and because we must keep our space clear due to frequent movement of patients and staff. **Visits are limited to two people for five minutes each hour**, at the discretion of the nurse or doctor. (Exceptions can be made in special circumstances, such as when the patient does not speak English, or if the patient is under 20 years old. Children under 14 are not permitted to visit.)

### Family and friends: While you are waiting

- Thank you for respecting our visiting policies. We will do our best to keep you informed.
- Please do not use cell phones in the waiting room. Please go to the lobby to use your phone.
- Please visit our cafeterias, located in the lobby and basement of the Farr Building.
- If you wish to wait at home, you may call for an update on the patient's status at 617-632-7360.

## Going home

Your nurse will monitor your recovery and will let you know when it is safe to get up and walk. If you are able to walk without any problems, and if your condition is stable, you will be discharged home. You will receive detailed discharge instructions before you leave the hospital. These will include information on:

- **Activity restrictions** – You will not be able to do any heavy lifting or engage in any vigorous activity for at least one week.
- **Driving restrictions** – You will be asked not to drive for 48 hours.
- **When to call your doctor** – You'll be given important information about your follow-up care.

Please remember, you must have a responsible adult available to take you home. If you are having a problem finding someone, you may want to arrange a wheelchair van (see enclosed information).