



Patient information: Right Heart Catheterisation

WHAT IS A RIGHT HEART CATHETERISATION?

This is a procedure where a catheter is passed into the veins in your neck or groin to measure the pressure in the heart and lungs.

WHAT SHOULD I DO TO PREPARE?

No fasting is required and you should take your medications as normal unless instructed otherwise by your doctor.

Arrive at the Hospital 60 minutes before your appointment time. Private patients present to the admission desk in the private hospital on level 4 of St. Vincent's Private Hospital. Public patients present to the Day Procedure Centre on level 5 of St. Vincent's Public Hospital.

SAME DAY CENTRE (PRIVATE) OR DAY PROCEDURE CENTRE (PUBLIC)

Staff here will arrange for you to see a clinic nurse prior to having your catheter. If you are already an inpatient at the time of your Right Heart Catheter you will be transported by ward staff to have the procedure.

If possible, come with a family member or friend who can accompany you home. Wear loose comfortable clothing and comfortable shoes.

WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I TAKE BLOODTHINNERS?

If you take warfarin you will need a recent International Normalised Ratio (INR) level (taken within 24 hours) when you come to your appointment. The nurse may repeat the INR level again before the procedure depending on the level and your dose of warfarin.⁽¹⁾

Platelet inhibitors such as aspirin or clopidogrel (Plavix[®]) can be taken as usual.

Non-vitamin K antagonist Oral Anticoagulants (NOACs) like apixaban (Eliquis[®]), dabigatran (Pradaxa[®]) and rivaroxaban (Xarelto[®]) should not be taken on the day of the Right Heart Catheter. If you normally take a dose in the morning please withhold this dose. At the time of your procedure the doctor will advise you if you should take the dose once the procedure is finished or if it is better to skip the dose.⁽²⁾

WHAT HAPPENS DURING THE PROCEDURE?

When you reach the procedure room the doctor will talk to you about the procedure, explain the risks and ask you to sign a consent form. Please feel free to ask any questions or voice any concerns that you have in regards to the procedure.

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If you haven't already done so you will be asked to remove clothing from above the waist and put on a hospital gown. You will need to lie flat throughout the procedure. Let the nurse know if you have back or breathing problems that may make this difficult for you.

The procedure is done under local anaesthetic and you should not experience much discomfort apart from the initial injection of local anaesthetic. If you do experience discomfort or if you are worried about anything you can let the nurse and doctor know so that they can help alleviate the problem.

Local Anaesthetic is injected under the skin in the neck near the vein using a fine needle. After access is gained to your vein a plastic catheter is passed through the vein to the heart and pressure readings are taken from the heart chambers and lungs.

If the pressure is high the doctor may decide to give a short acting drug to try and lower the pressure temporarily.

The procedure usually takes between 30 minutes and an hour.

WHAT HAPPENS AFTER THE PROCEDURE?

When the catheter is removed, the doctor will apply pressure to the small puncture site in your neck to prevent bleeding.

You will then be asked to apply light pressure to the puncture site for a further 10 minutes.

When finished you will be brought to the recovery area where the nurses will check your vital signs and assess the puncture site for any bleeding or swelling before you can go home.

Avoid heavy lifting for 24 hours. Activities like coughing; sneezing, laughing or bending over can cause the puncture site to bleed a little, please support the puncture site during these activities for 24 hours.

If you experience swelling, increased pain or bleeding in your neck after you leave, you should apply pressure and seek assistance from your local doctor or emergency department.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS OF THIS PROCEDURE?

There are risks associated with this procedure; these are listed below for your information. The doctor will go through the risks with you again before you sign the consent and provide more information if required.



COMMON

- Minor bleeding and bruising at the puncture site
- Abnormal Heart beat lasting several seconds that settles by itself

UNCOMMON

- Difficulty passing the catheter into the neck vein. Local Anaesthetic around your voice box may cause temporary loss of voice - this wears off quickly
- Abnormal Heart Rhythm that continues for a longer time and may need to be corrected
- Punctured artery in the neck that may cause extensive bruising or bleeding and require repair

RARE

- Infection.
- Allergic reaction
- Air embolism
- Collapsed lung
- Damage to the lung blood vessels causing bleeding.
- Stroke or other thromboembolic event
- Death (extremely rare)⁽³⁾

For further information please contact:

The Heart Lung Clinic at St Vincent's Hospital

02 8382 3150 or visit:

<https://www.svhhearthealth.com.au/procedures/procedures-treatments/right-heart-catheter>

References:

Harris, J. & Hayward, C.S. (2010) 'Safety of Right Heart Catheterisation in a Non Fasting, Anti-coagulated Population', e-Poster 505 (FR132), CSANZ

Clinical Excellence Commission (2017) 'Non-vitamin K Antagonist Oral Anticoagulant (NOAC) Guidelines', available at: <http://www.cec.health.nsw.gov.au/>

Weinhouse, G. (2019) 'Pulmonary artery catheterization: Indications, contraindications, and complications in adults' Finlay G, UpToDate, Retrieved July 19, 2019, from <https://www.uptodate.com/contents/pulmonary-artery-catheterization-indications-contraindications-and-complications-in-adults>