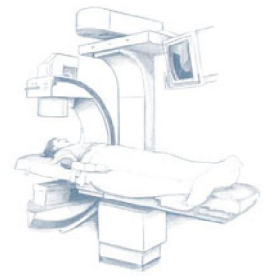
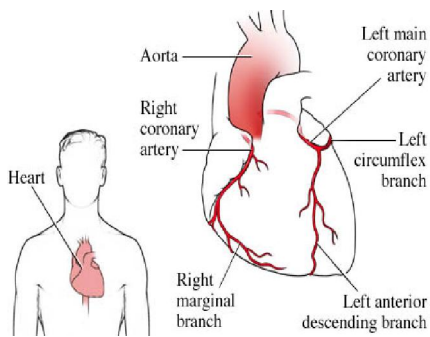


About Left Heart Catheterization



WHAT ARE THE CORONARY ARTERIES ?

The heart needs a constant supply of oxygen to do its work. The coronary (heart) arteries meet this need. They supply oxygen rich blood to the entire heart.



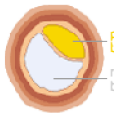
- ♥ The Right Coronary Artery (RCA) and its branches supply blood to the right side of the heart and the bottom of the left side.
- ♥ The Left Main Coronary Artery (LCA) and its branches supply blood to the left side of the heart. It divides into two large arteries:
 - § the Left Anterior Descending (LAD)
 - § the Circumflex (Cx)

WHAT IS CORONARY ARTERY DISEASE ?

healthy artery



inside an unhealthy artery

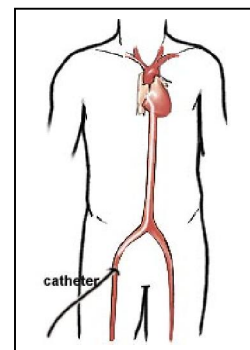


plaque build-up

Coronary artery disease occurs when one or more of the coronary arteries become narrowed or blocked by fatty deposits known as "plaque". The plaque is like a blister, with a soft fatty center. Blood flow and oxygen delivery to the heart are reduced as the plaque increases in size.

WHAT IS A HEART CATHETERIZATION ?

A heart catheterization is a special diagnostic test that looks directly at the left ventricle and the inside of all the coronary arteries. Thin hollow wires (catheters) are threaded through a main artery into the left side of the heart. A special dye is injected into each coronary artery. Plaque build-up is then seen on x-ray. The heart valves, muscle wall motion and pump strength (ejection fraction) may also be checked.



- ♥ A heart catheterization is done:
 - by a cardiologist (heart specialist)
 - in the cardiac catheterization laboratory

- ♥ Before a heart catheterization:
 - food and drink are held
 - allergies to the catheter dye are assessed
 - EKG and blood pressures are measured
 - an intravenous (IV) line is started
 - the skin is prepared where the catheter is to be inserted
 - medications are given to thin the blood
 - the area where the catheter is to be inserted is numbed
- ♥ After the heart catheterization:
 - the sheath used to insert the catheter wire is removed
 - pressure or a special closure device is used to seal the artery
 - the leg or arm is kept straight for several hours
 - bed rest is continued as ordered
 - food and drink are allowed
 - fluids are encouraged
 - discharge instructions for home care are given

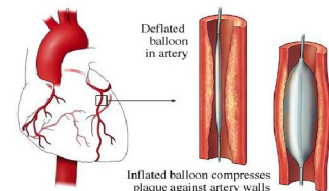
WHAT TREATMENTS IMPROVE BLOOD FLOW TO THE HEART?

♥ Medications

Medications are ordered for each persons special needs.

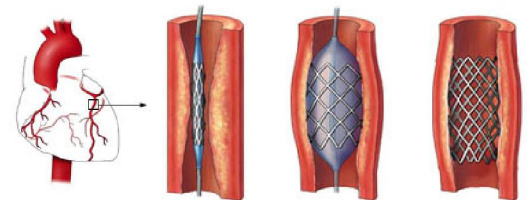
♥ Angioplasty

A tiny balloon on the end of thin catheter is threaded to the blocked heart artery. The balloon is inflated at the blockage. The plaque is compressed and the artery is opened.



♥ Stents

A stent is a small circular stainless steel mesh placed in the opened artery for support. The lining of the artery wall will cover the stent in time. Until this happens, a blood thinner is needed to prevent a clot at the stent.



♥ Coronary Artery Bypass Surgery (CABG)

A blocked artery is bypassed with a vein or artery graft. A new path is created for blood flow.

