

Right Heart Catheterization

How to prepare and what to expect

*This handout explains how to prepare and what to expect when you are scheduled for a right heart catheterization at **UW Medical Center (UWMC) Montlake** campus.*

Your Appointment

Date: _____ Arrival Time: _____

Please note, your arrival time is not the time your procedure is scheduled to start. Arrival time is the time you need to arrive for it to be possible to start your procedure on time. We will do our best to start your procedure on time. Please be patient if emergencies in the hospital cause a delay.

Phone Call Before Your Procedure

A Cardiac Procedures nurse will call you **3 to 7 days** before your procedure. The nurse will review your medicine list and allergies and answer any questions you may have. There may be some medicines you need to stop taking on or before the day of your procedure.

Please tell this nurse if you have any concerns about who will drive you home after your procedure. **If you get sedation, you cannot drive yourself home or take a bus, taxi, or shuttle by yourself.**

- If you do not receive this call by 3 days before your procedure, call the nurse at 206.598.8435 or 206.597.3609.
- If you need to change or cancel your appointment, call **206.598.8200** right away.

Procedure Day

You will need to have your blood drawn first. Do **NOT** go to 2nd Floor Pacific Admitting until after you have had your blood drawn.



On the day of your procedure, first go to Blood Draw, then to 2nd Floor Pacific Admitting.

Blood Draw

- Enter the hospital through the **main entrance** on Pacific Street. You will be on the 3rd floor of the hospital.
- When you enter the lobby, you will see the Information Desk. Blood Draw is down the hall to the left of the Information Desk.
- As you walk down that hall, you will see the Blood Draw sign on your right, just after the Outpatient Pharmacy.

Check In

After your blood has been drawn, **go to 2nd Floor Pacific Admitting:**

- Walk across the main lobby to the Pacific elevators. Go down to the 2nd floor.
- As you step off the elevator, turn left. Go down a short hallway. You will see a sign on your right that says **2nd Floor Pacific Admitting**. Inside that room, a receptionist at the desk will check you in for your procedure.

About This Procedure

Your provider has referred you for a *right heart catheterization*. This procedure shows how well the right side of your heart moves blood from your body into your lungs. This procedure will help your doctor diagnose certain problems in your heart or lungs.

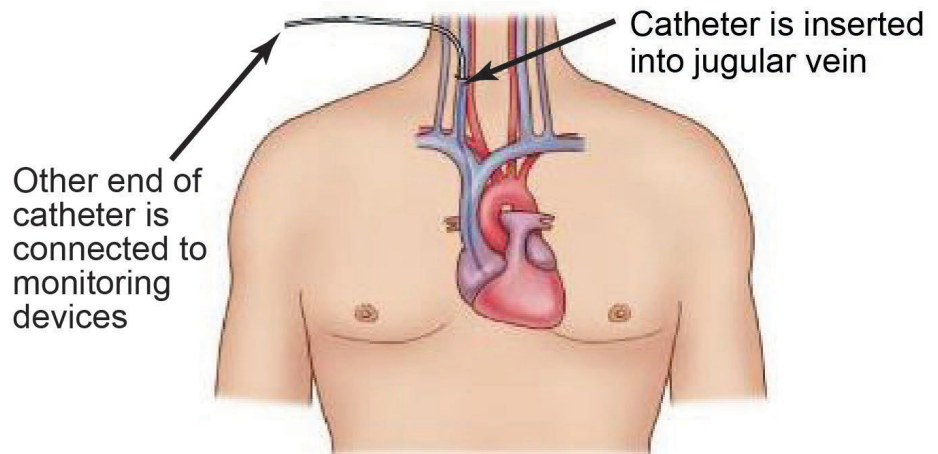
During the procedure, X-ray and ultrasound images may be used to see details of your heart. The pressures inside your heart will also be measured. Your doctor will study this information to see how well your heart's chambers, valves, and other structures are working.

What to Expect

Placing the Sheath

Your doctor will first place a short hollow tube (*sheath*) to help guide a catheter into your vein. Most times, the sheath is placed in a *jugular vein* in the neck (see the drawing on page 3). Very rarely, a different vein is used. The vein that is used will affect how long you need to stay in the hospital after your procedure.

When the sheath is placed, you may feel pressure, but you should not feel pain. If you have any pain, please tell your doctor.



For this procedure, a catheter (tube) will be inserted into a vein, most likely a jugular vein in your neck.

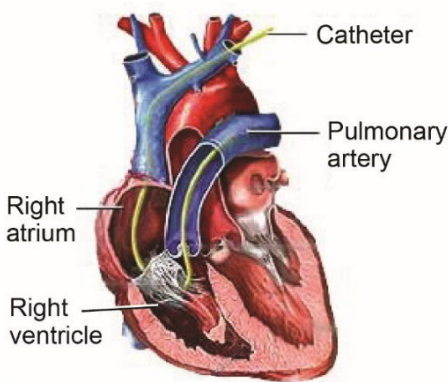
Pulmonary Artery Catheter

After blood flows through your body, it returns to the right side of your heart. Then it is pumped into your *pulmonary artery*, the main vessel that carries blood to your lungs.

After the sheath is placed, your doctor will put a *pulmonary artery catheter* (a long, thin tube) through the sheath. The catheter will be moved into the right side of your heart.

As the catheter is moved through your heart, your doctor will measure pressures inside your *right atrium* and *right ventricle* (see drawing at left).

After the catheter reaches your pulmonary artery, your doctor will inflate a tiny balloon at the tip of the catheter. This measures the pressures on the left side of your heart.



The catheter is moved through your right atrium, right ventricle, and pulmonary artery.

Heart Medicines

This procedure is often done to check how well your current medicine is working. It may also be done to help your doctor decide what medicine you should be taking.

The provider who referred you for this procedure will receive the results right away. Please follow up with this referring provider, not the doctor who does the procedure.

Heart Monitoring

The right heart catheter is sometimes left in place to monitor how different heart or lung medicines are working. This may be done if

the blood output from your heart is too low, or the pressures in your heart and lungs are too high. This monitoring helps your doctor find the best medicine to improve how your heart works.

If you are being monitored in this way, you will stay in the intensive care unit (ICU) overnight or for a few days. Your length of stay will depend on your condition and how long your doctor wants you to be monitored.

Sedation and Local Anesthetic

Most patients do not have sedation for this procedure, and do not have any complaints during or after the procedure. You will need to decide if you want to have:

- **Only local anesthetic.** This medicine will numb the area where the sheath is inserted. You will be fully awake during the procedure. If you have only local anesthetic:
 - You can return to your usual activities after your procedure.
 - You may drive yourself home and will not need to have someone stay with you.
- **Both local anesthetic and sedation.** Sedation will make you relaxed and sleepy during the procedure.

If you have both sedation and local anesthetic:

- You may receive sedation in pill form or by *intravenous* line (IV). If you have IV sedation, an IV will be inserted into a vein in your arm.
- You cannot drive yourself home. You may not take a taxi or public transportation without a responsible adult with you.
- You may not have sedation if you have eaten within 8 hours of the procedure.

At Home on Procedure Day

Fasting

- Many patients prefer to do their right heart catheterization without any sedation. If you are comfortable without sedation, then you may eat and drink until 2 hours before the procedure.
- If you would like sedation or would like to discuss sedation with the doctor on the day of your procedure, please do **not** eat or drink for 8 hours before the procedure.

- If you are unsure about which option you would prefer, please do **not** eat or drink for 8 hours before the procedure, and discuss with your doctor on the day of the test.

Medicines

- If you do not need to make any changes to your medicines, take your usual morning medicines with **only** small sips of water.

What to Bring to the Hospital

Please bring these items with you on the day of your procedure:

- **A list of all medicines you now take.** For all medicines, write down the dose and how often you take each one.
- **If you are having sedation, the name and phone number of your contact person and the person who will take you home.** This may be the same person, or two different people. The person who takes you home must be with you when you receive instructions before you leave the hospital.

At the Hospital

While you are in the Cardiac Procedures Pre-procedure area:

- We will ask you to change into a hospital gown.
- A nurse will ask questions about your health history. We want to know about any allergies you have and to review your current medicines.
- We will take your blood pressure and temperature.
- If you will have IV sedation, we will place an *intravenous* (IV) line into a vein in your arm.
- You will meet with the doctor who will be doing your procedure. Your doctor will explain the procedure to you and talk with you about risks and benefits. Please be sure to ask any questions you have.
- We will ask you to sign a consent form that gives us permission to do your procedure. You may decide not to sign the form. The procedure will not be done if you do not give your consent by signing the form.
- You may have 1 or 2 family members wait with you in the Pre-procedure area. During your procedure, your family may wait in a nearby waiting area.

In the Catheterization Lab

- We will help you get onto a special table that has a camera above it. The table will slide back and forth during the procedure. This table and camera help your doctor see the blood vessels and chambers of your heart from different angles.
- We will attach *electrodes* to your skin to monitor your heart rhythm.
- We will cover you with *sterile* (germ-free) paper sheets.
- If you received sedation, you will start to feel relaxed and sleepy.
- We will clean your neck with an antiseptic solution. We may also shave the area, if needed. This will help prevent infection.
- Always ask your doctor or nurse if you have any questions or do not understand any part of your procedure.

After Your Procedure

- If you do not need more recovery time, a nurse will give you instructions and you may leave the hospital directly from the procedure lab.
- If you had sedation, you may need to stay in recovery for a short time. Your blood pressure and vital signs will be checked often.
- You may eat as usual.

Leaving the Hospital

If you did **not** have sedation, you may drive yourself home.

If You Have ANY Sedation

Sedation can make you sleepy and makes it hard for you to think clearly. For your safety and the safety of others:

- **A responsible adult must take you home after your procedure.** You cannot take a bus, shuttle, taxi, or any other transportation by yourself.
- For the next **24 hours**:
 - Do **NOT** drive.
 - Make sure you have a responsible adult who can help you as needed.
 - Do **NOT** be responsible for children, pets, or an adult who needs care.
 - Do **NOT** drink alcohol or take drugs other than the ones your doctors prescribed or suggested.
 - Do **NOT** make important decisions or sign legal papers.

Activity Restrictions

- **For 24 hours** after your procedure, rest quietly at home. If you had sedation, see instructions under “If You Have ANY Sedation” above.
- Starting 24 hours after your procedure, you may:
 - Return to light activity.
 - Drive.
- **For 48 hours** after your procedure, avoid heavy activity, such as housework, gardening, or any self-care tasks you can do later.

Pain Control

Some people are sore for 1 to 2 days where the catheter was inserted. If you need medicine for pain relief:

- You may take acetaminophen (Tylenol). Follow the dose instructions on the package.
- Take your regular aspirin as prescribed for your heart, but do **not** take more aspirin for pain.
- Do **not** take other products that contain aspirin.
- For 5 days, do **not** take ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin), naproxen (Aleve, Naprosyn), or other anti-inflammatories. They may cause increased bleeding.

Site Care

- Keep the site clean and dry.
- You may remove the dressing 24 hours after your procedure.
- After removing the dressing, gently clean the site with mild soap and water. Do not scrub or rub the area. Lightly pat dry with a clean towel.
- You may shower the day after your procedure, but do **not** take a bath, sit in a hot tub, or go swimming for 5 days.
- For the next 3 days, check for signs of infection. Call the cardiologist who did your procedure if you have:
 - Redness or drainage at the site.
 - Fever, chills, or temperature higher than 101.5°F (38.6°C).
- You may have a bruise where the catheter was inserted. This is normal. The bruise may spread down your neck over the next day. It may take 2 to 3 weeks for the bruise to go away.

When to Call

If you have a lot of pain or swelling at the catheter site, call the cardiologist who did your procedure.

If you have heavy bleeding or a lot of swelling, put pressure on the site and call 911.

Call 206.598.6190 and ask to page the Cardiology I Fellow on call if you have:

- **Swelling or blood oozing** where the catheter was inserted, that does not stop after you apply pressure for 10 minutes.
- **Severe pain** that is not eased by acetaminophen (Tylenol).
- Any **signs of infection** (such as redness or fever as mentioned above).

Follow-up Care

- Keep taking your prescribed medicines unless your doctor tells you otherwise.
- Follow up with your primary care provider after your procedure, as instructed.

Driving Directions

UWMC - Montlake campus is at 1959 N.E. Pacific St., at the south end of the University of Washington campus (see driving directions and map on page 9 and parking directions on page 10).

Driving Directions

From Interstate 5:

- Take Exit 168B (Bellevue, SR 520) heading east.
- Next, take the Montlake Blvd. exit. Turn left onto Montlake Blvd.
- After crossing the bridge, turn left onto Pacific St.
UWMC - Montlake is on your left.
- For the Triangle Garage, take the next right onto N.E. Pacific Pl.

From Interstate 405:

- Take Exit 14 (Seattle via Evergreen Point Bridge, SR 520), heading west.
- Then take the Montlake Blvd. exit. Veer right onto Montlake Blvd.
- After crossing the bridge, turn left onto Pacific St.
UWMC - Montlake is on your left.
- For the Triangle Garage, take the next right onto N.E. Pacific Pl.



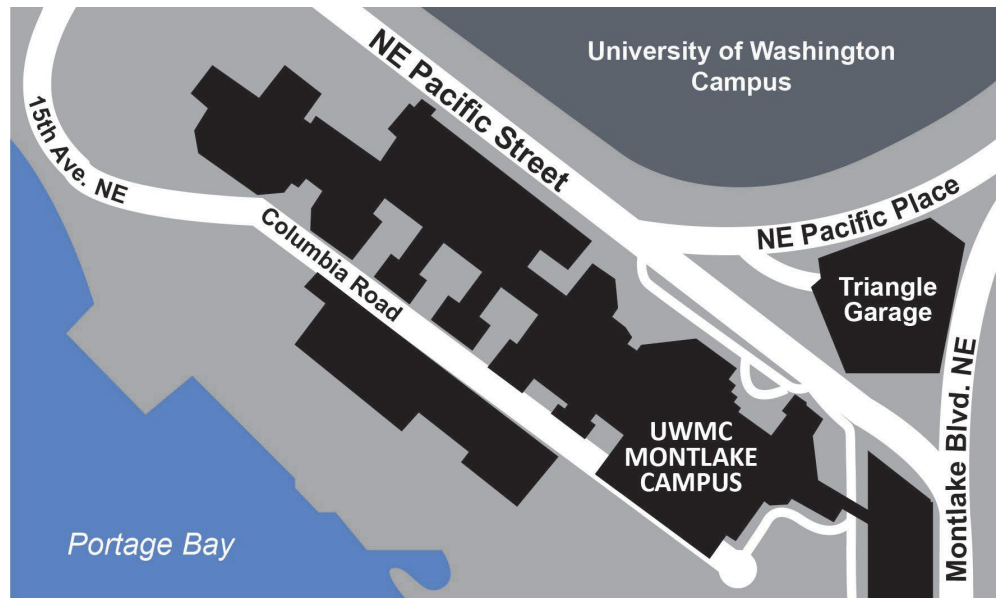
Parking

Triangle Parking Garage

Patient parking is in the Triangle Garage. The Triangle Garage is on N.E. Pacific Place, across the street from the hospital (see map below). It is underground. A walking tunnel connects the garage to the hospital's main entrance. Check in at 2nd Floor Pacific Admitting.

Parking Validation

Parking in the Triangle Garage can be validated to reduce your cost. Bring your parking ticket with you to the hospital. Ask for a validation sticker when you check in at Cardiac Procedures.



Questions?

Your questions are important. Call your doctor or healthcare provider if you have questions or concerns.

- **For general questions** weekdays from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., call the Heart Institute at 206.598.4300.
- **For questions related to your procedure**, weekdays from 6:30 a.m. to 8 p.m., call Cardiac Procedures at 206.598.7146. Ask to talk with a nurse.
- **For urgent concerns related to your procedure**, or if it is after hours or on a weekend or holiday, call 206.598.6190 and ask to page the Cardiology I Fellow on call.