

Right Heart Catheterization

At UW Medical Center - Northwest Campus

This handout explains how to prepare and what to expect when you are scheduled for a right heart catheterization at UWMC - Northwest campus.

Your Appointment

Your procedure is scheduled for:

Date: _____ 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 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, please call the nurse at 206.598.8435 or 206.597.3609 weekdays between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. If it is after hours, leave a message. We will return your call on the next business day.
- If you need to change or cancel your appointment, call **206.598.8200** right away.

Procedure Day

To check in, go to the 1st floor in the A-Wing Building.

- Use the main hospital entrance to enter the hospital. You will be in the lobby on the 1st floor of the hospital.
- Go past the Starbucks. After passing Starbucks, you will see the check-in information desk on your left. A staff person will be at the check-in information desk to help you.
- If you need to have blood drawn, this will be done by the nurse on the Cardiac Procedure Unit.
- If you are running late please notify the Cardiac Procedure Unit at UW Northwest Campus at 206.668.1085.



This handout is for patients having their procedure at the Heart Institute at UWMC - Northwest campus.

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.

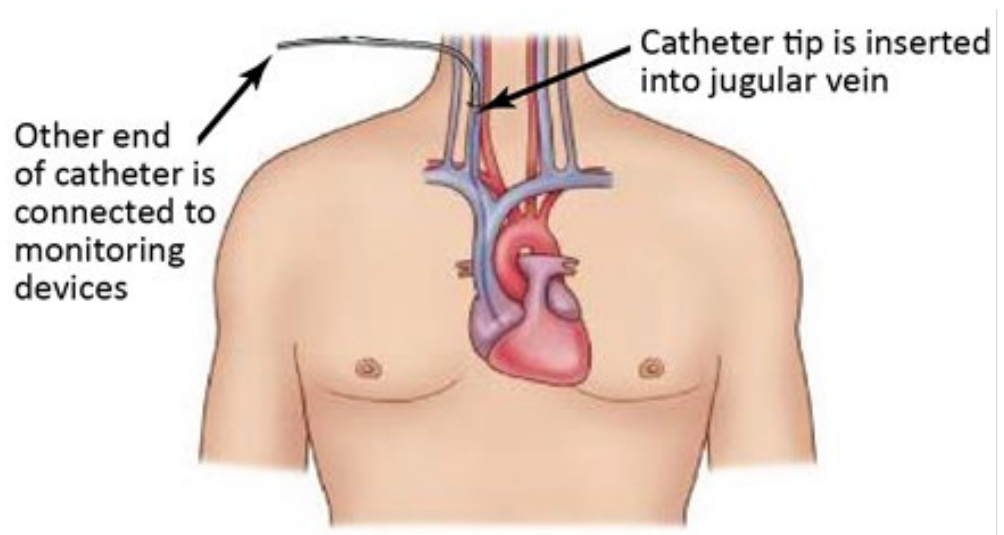
During the procedure, X-ray and ultrasound images may be used to see details of your heart. The pressures inside your heart will also be measured. Your doctor will study this information to see how well your heart's chambers, valves, and other structures are working.

What to Expect

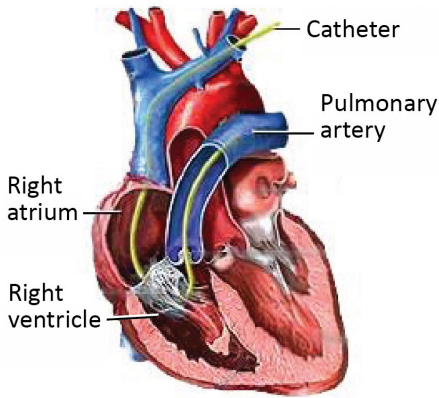
Placing the Sheath

Your doctor will first place a *sheath* (short hollow tube) into your vein. Most times, the sheath is placed in a *jugular vein* in the neck (see drawing below), or a vein in your upper arm. 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 sheath, or catheter (tube) will be inserted into a vein, most likely a jugular vein in your neck.



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

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. This is the part of your heart that your doctor is examining.

After the sheath is placed in your vein, 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).

Your doctor will also measure pressures on the left side of your heart. This is done by inflating a tiny balloon at the tip of the catheter. Your doctor will do this after the catheter reaches your 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 talk with your referring provider about your results.

Heart Monitoring

The right heart catheter is sometimes left in place to monitor how different heart 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 to monitor you.

Before Your Procedure

Being prepared for your procedure will help make your hospital stay go as smoothly as possible. Here are some things you should know:

- **You may need to stop taking some of your medicines for a short time before your procedure.** Most times, you will be able to start taking them again after the procedure. The nurse who calls you will tell you if you need to make any changes in your medicines.

- **If you take warfarin (Coumadin):** Before your procedure, talk with the provider who prescribed this medicine for you. You will need instructions about whether to stop taking it, and when.

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 receive:

- **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 there.
- **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 oral 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 may **not** drive yourself home.
- Most patients do not have sedation for this procedure, and do not have any complaints during or after the procedure.

At Home on Procedure Day

Fasting

- **Starting 8 hours before** your check-in time, do **not** eat any high-fat foods. Examples of high-fat foods are bacon, sausage, or eggs.
- **Starting at least 6 hours before your procedure, do NOT eat or drink anything.**
 - You may have a light snack if you finish eating **6 hours before** your check-in time. An example of a light snack is tea and toast.
- Most patients tell us that having something to eat and drink in the morning helps the day go more smoothly, lowers stress, and improves their overall mood. If you wake up **more than 6 hours before** your procedure, try eating a light snack (*see example above*).
- If you want to eat a small meal, set your alarm for **more than 8 hours before** your procedure.

Medicines

- If you do not need to make any changes to your medicines, take your usual morning medicines with **only** small sips of water.
- Important: if your doctor has prescribed aspirin for your heart health, take it as usual the morning of your procedure.

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. Include all non-prescription medicines such as multivitamins, other vitamins, and herbal supplements.
 - Any other medicines, including vitamins and supplements, you have taken in the last 2 days.
- **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 2 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 will 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 side effects. 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 our 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 with a gel. They will monitor your heart rhythms.
- 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 or other catheter insertion site 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

After your procedure, you will be taken to Cardiac Procedures Recovery.

- If your doctor decides you do not need recovery time or you did not have sedation, a nurse will give you instructions and you may leave the hospital.
- If you had sedation, you may 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 make 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 may not 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 during this time.
 - 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 “*If You Have ANY Sedation*” section above.
- Starting 24 hours after your procedure, you may:
 - Shower
 - Return to light activity
 - Drive
- **For 48 hours after your procedure**, avoid strenuous activity, such as housework, gardening, or any self-care tasks that 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 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-inflammatory medicines. They may cause increased bleeding.

Site Care

- Keep the catheter site clean and dry.
- You may remove the dressing or bandage 24 hours after your procedure.
- After you remove the dressing, gently clean the site with mild soap and water. Do **not** scrub or rub the area. Gently 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 at the catheter site
 - Fever higher than 101.5°F (38.6°C)
 - Drainage from the site
- You may have a bruise where the catheter was inserted. This is normal. The bruise may spread down your neck or the limb of the puncture site 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 or signs of infection (see section above) 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 206.363.1004 and ask to page the Interventional Cardiologist 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 relieved 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.

How to Find Us

UWMC - Northwest campus is at 1550 N. 115th St., Seattle, WA 98133 (see area map below).

Driving Directions

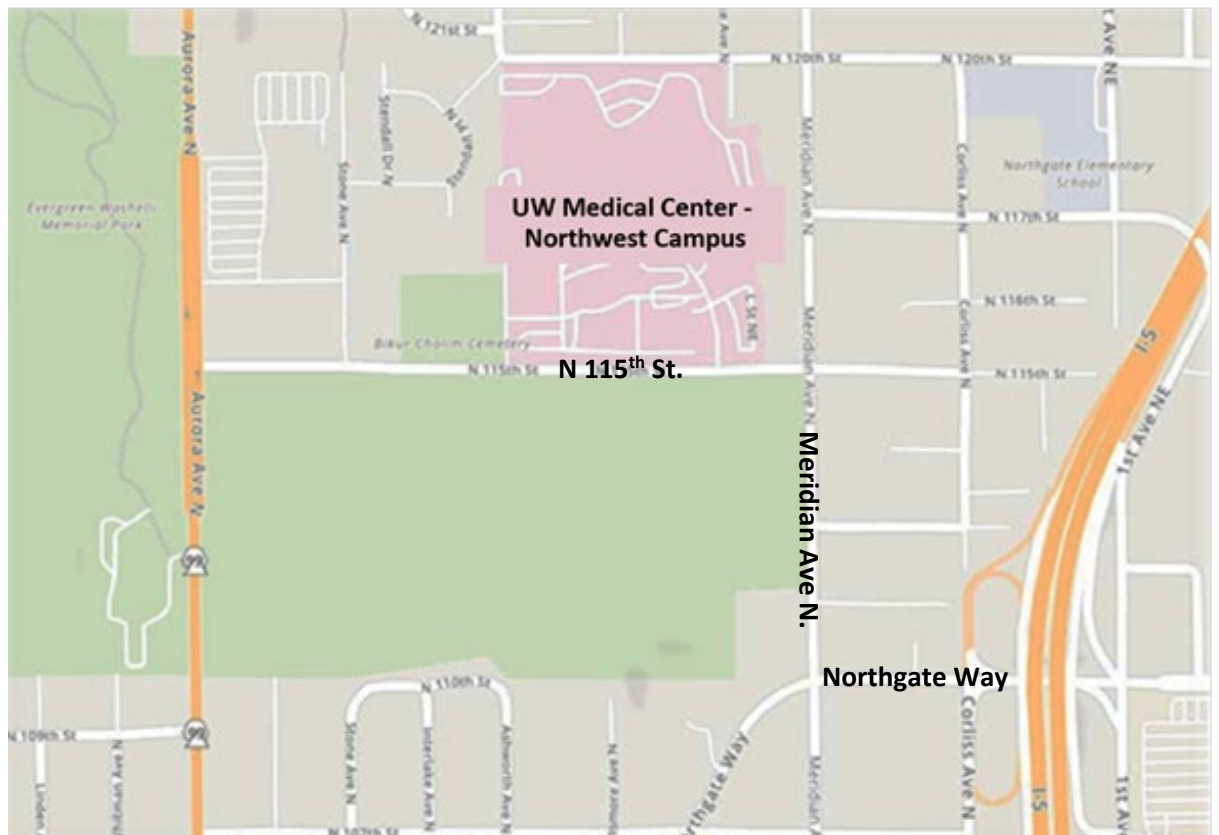
Here are directions when driving either northbound or southbound on Interstate 5:

Northbound on I-5

- Take Exit 173.
- Turn left (west) onto Northgate Way.
- At Meridian Avenue N., turn right (north).
- Take the first left onto N. 115th Street.
The entrance to UWMC - Northwest campus will be on your right

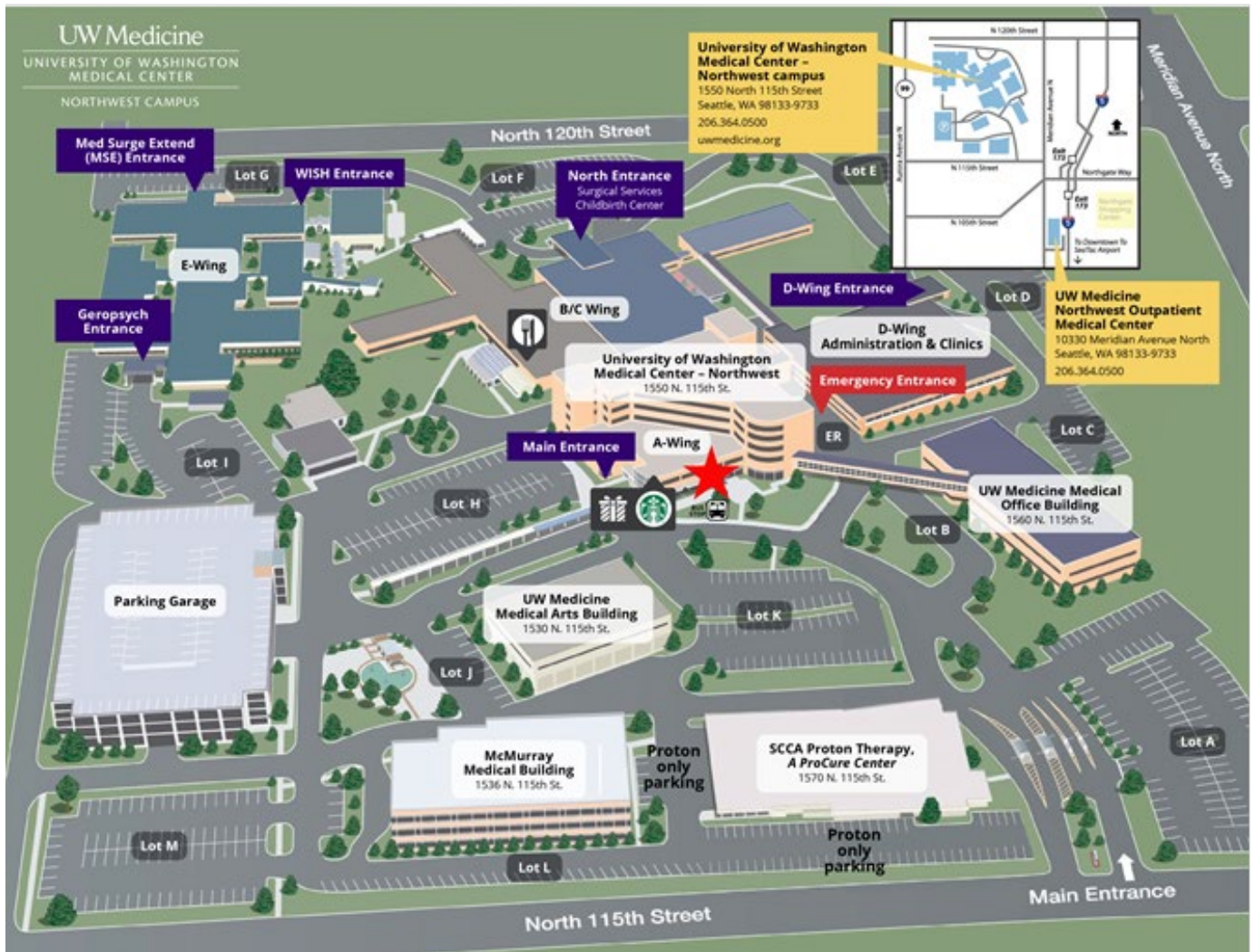
Southbound on I-5

- Take Exit 173.
- Turn right (west) onto Northgate Way.
- At Meridian Avenue N., turn right (north).
- Take the first left onto N. 115th Street. The entrance to UWMC - Northwest campus will be on your right



Parking

From the main entrance on N. 115th Street, drive straight. Follow the road toward the main UWMC - Northwest building, past Lot K and Lot B. You may park in any parking lot that has openings. A-Wing is in the main building. (See star on the map below.)



Questions?

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

- **For general questions** weekdays from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., call the Heart Institute at UWMC, 206.598.4300 or 206.597.3609.
- **For urgent concerns related to your procedure**, or if it is after hours or on a weekend or holiday, call your provider's office:
 - **Montlake Campus Patients:** Call 206.598.6190 and ask to speak to the Interventional Cardiologist or the Cardiology Fellow Provider on call.
 - **Northwest Campus Patients:** Call 206.363.1004 and ask to speak to the Interventional Cardiologist on call.