



# Leachman Cardiology Associates, P.A.

AN AFFILIATE OF TEXAS HEART INSTITUTE

## DIAGNOSTIC CARDIAC CATHETERIZATION

### What is it?

Cardiac catheterization (often called "Heart Cath") is a minimally invasive test that allows us to see the inside of the heart as it pumps. This test is used to see blood flow through the small arteries that supply the heart itself and through the valves between different compartments or chambers of the heart. It also measures pressure within the heart and components. A Cardiac catheterization helps us evaluate how tightly the valves close, how clear the coronary arteries are, and the strength of the heart muscle.

### What do I do?

Do not smoke for 24 hours before the procedure.

- Do not eat or drink anything after midnight the night before the test.
- Consult with us regarding which medicines to continue to take the evening before the test.

### What will happen?

A small intravenous (IV) line is inserted into your arm and electrodes are attached to your chest and legs. A small cardiac catheter (a long, flexible tube, no wider than the refill cartridge of a ballpoint pen) will be inserted into your arm or groin. Numbing medicine will be injected into the skin at the site where the catheter will be inserted and a small needle will puncture the skin to expose the blood vessel. The catheter is threaded into the blood vessel until it reaches the heart. Once there, dye will be injected and an image or x-ray film will be created. Pictures will be taken of the walls and chambers of your heart and coronary arteries. Once the catheterization is over and the catheter is removed, a bandage will be firmly taped to the site.

There are several methods to close the catheter puncture site in the artery:

- Pressure and bed rest
- Stitches at the artery puncture site
- Collagen plug

Let the staff know immediately if you experience symptoms such as:

- Bleeding or wetness at the cath site
- Pain or numbness
- **How long does it take?**  
The catheterization will take about 15 minutes to an hour to complete.