





Cardiac catheterization (cath) typically involves inserting a small tube or sheath into a major artery (most commonly the femoral artery in the groin) and snaking a small catheter to the heart. Contrast dye is injected through the catheter generating motion picture images of blood flow through the heart (coronary) arteries and chambers. Angioplasty and stenting, commonly referred to as "PCI," can then be performed as necessary through the catheter. For procedures performed via femoral access, patients are usually prescribed 2-8 hours of complete bed-rest after the procedure along with various manual or mechanical compression techniques or artificial closure devices ("plugs") to promote healing of the area and reduce bleeding. Commonly patients experience pain and discomfort at the femoral access site for several days or weeks after the procedure even in the absence of complications. Major complications of this approach include severe bleeding requiring transfusion or even surgery to repair the femoral artery.

An alternative access site for cardiac cath is the radial artery that runs on the right side of the wrist. Numerous clinical trials and studies have demonstrated excellent outcomes and increased patient comfort of cardiac cath and PCI via the radial artery. These studies have also demonstrated a reduction in major complications including a 70% reduction in bleeding. Further there is no need for complete bed rest, manual compression, or artificial closure devices after the procedure. Patients are often able to be discharged from the hospital and return to completely normal activities much sooner than with femoral catheterization.

Drs. Patel and Slota are the first in the region to offer radial artery cardiac cath and PCI in any patient with intact arterial circulation to the wrist and hand. This is in contrast to many institutions where it is only offered to carefully selected patients.

If you have any questions regarding cardiac cath and the radial approach please do not hesitate to contact us. Below are some relevant links to the radial approach for cardiac cath, a detailed video of the procedure and photographs of one of our patients undergoing the procedure.

Transradial Video - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Bqgk4o6EeCA>

Transradial Access Center - <http://www.ptca.org/radial/index.html>

Transradial World (website of one of the early pioneers and foremost authorities on transradial cath and PCI, Dr. Tejas Patel) - <http://transradialworld.org/index.html>

