



Catheter Ablation

The following information is a brief description of the Catheter Ablation procedure. If you have any questions after reading this information, please speak with your nurse.

WHAT IS CATHETER ABLATION?

- A form of cardiac catheterization done in conjunction with an EPS (*electrophysiology study*) where thin tubes with special wires (*catheters*) are used to record the heart's electrical activity.
- After the area causing the irregular heartbeat is located, a special machine is used to direct high frequency ("*Radiofrequency Ablation*") electrical energy to form a small scar in this area thus curing the arrhythmia.

WHY IS IT DONE?

- It is used to treat abnormal heart rhythms causing the irregular heartbeat (*arrhythmia*).

WHERE IS PROCEDURE DONE?

- Cardiac Catheterization Lab, 5th floor, Tisch Hospital.

HOW LONG DOES THE PROCEDURE TAKE?

- The procedure can take from 1 to 5 hours from the time the physician begins. This time does not include transportation or time needed to set up the equipment.

WHAT PREPARATION IS NEEDED?

- If not already done, blood work, EKG, and chest x-ray may be done.
- If not already done, you will have a history and an assessment by a nurse, and discuss the procedure with a physician from the Electrophysiology team.
- After the physician has explained the procedure to you, you will need to sign a consent form giving your permission for the ablation.



Catheter Ablation

- You will not be able to eat or drink after midnight, the night before your procedure.
- The physician will instruct you on which medications you can take the morning of the procedure with a sip of water.

DAY OF THE PROCEDURE:

- Do not eat or drink after midnight the day of the procedure.
- Your nurse will give you prescribed medications that you can take with a sip of water. In some cases, your physician or the nurse practitioner may order changes in medications for diabetes, irregular heartbeat, and anticoagulants.
- Before the procedure, it is best to urinate and empty your bladder.
- You change into hospital gown. Remove all jewelry and metal objects. Give all your valuables to your nurse to lock in a safe place.
- You can wear dentures and your glasses.
- You will be helped on to a stretcher. An Escort personnel will take you to the Cardiac Catheterization Lab.

WHAT HAPPENS DURING THE PROCEDURE?

- You will lie on an x-ray table.
- You will have your blood pressure and pulse checked, and EKG monitor leads will be attached to your chest, limbs, and back.
- Sedation will be given to you during the procedure.
- Depending on the expected length the procedure, a Foley catheter may be inserted to drain your bladder.
- Sometimes a special ultrasound of the heart (*Transesophageal Echocardiogram*) will be performed from the food pipe (*esophagus*). This test will obtain very clear pictures to insure that there are no blood clots in the heart and that it is safe to proceed with the ablation. If you require this test, you will need to sign a consent form.



Catheter Ablation

- The skin site(s) will be cleansed and a local anesthetic injected to numb the area(s).
- The doctor will insert long, thin tubes (*catheters*) to both groin areas (*femoral veins*) and possibly the right neck area (*subclavian* or *jugular vein*) using x-ray to position the catheters.
- The catheters have wires that are attached to a special pacemaker, which is used to stimulate your heart with small electrical impulses. This procedure is done to try and induce your irregular heartbeat (*arrhythmia*). This process is called "mapping."
- Once the abnormal rhythm pathway is located, radio frequency energy is used to form a small scar thereby destroying the pathway.
- After the areas are destroyed, the catheters are removed and pressure will be applied to the insertion sites for several minutes. Bandages will be placed on the catheter insertion sites.

WHAT WILL YOU FEEL?

- You may feel a stinging sensation when the local anesthesia is injected.
- You may experience mild chest discomfort while the radiofrequency ablation energy is given.

WHAT HAPPENS AFTER THE PROCEDURE?

- You will be returned to your room by stretcher.
- You must stay in bed with the involved limb(s) straight for about 2-4 hours after the procedure. Your nurse will give you specific instructions.
- The nurse will check your blood pressure, pulse, and the area around the insertion site.
- You will be placed on a cardiac monitor.
- You can resume your usual diet. Your nurse will give you your prescribed medications.
- The nursing staff will help you get up the first time.



Catheter Ablation

- The nursing staff will review activity recommendations with you.
- **Notify your nurse for bleeding or any unusual discomfort at the insertion site, or if you have any palpitations, chest discomfort, or any unusual symptoms.**
- Before you are discharged, the physician from the Cardiac Catheterization Laboratory will meet with you and review discharge instructions and need for follow-up.

SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS OR QUESTIONS
