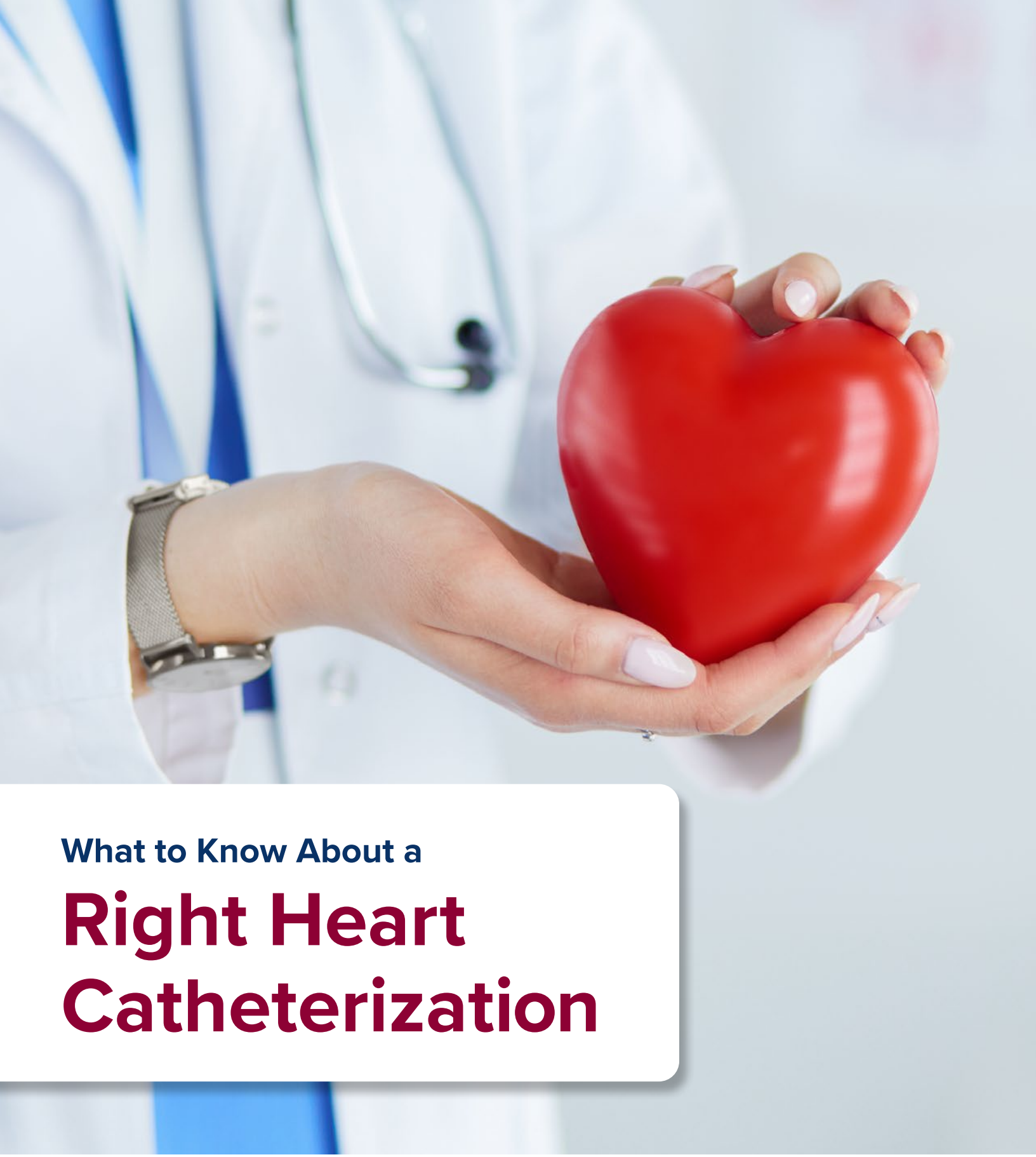

What to Know About a

Right Heart Catheterization

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If your healthcare team has recommended a **right heart catheterization**, you probably have a few questions—including *what a right heart catheterization is* and *what to expect during this procedure*. In this brochure, you'll find the answers to these questions and others that patients often ask.

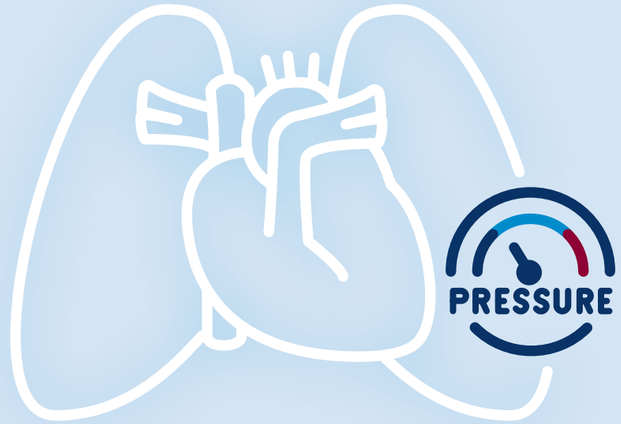
You can also use the space provided at the back of this brochure to write down any other questions you may have. Remember to discuss your questions with your healthcare team and refer to this brochure as needed.

What is a right heart catheterization?

Right heart catheterization is also known as a right heart "cath."

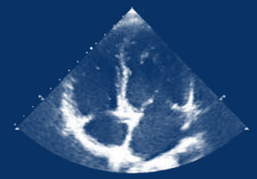
The right heart cath procedure measures the pressures in your heart and the blood vessels of your lungs. This helps your healthcare team understand how well your heart and lungs are working.

The information that a right heart cath provides can be used to diagnose certain types of heart and lung diseases. In addition, a right heart cath is used to track changes and monitor these diseases over time.



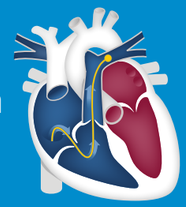
If your healthcare team has recommended a right heart cath for you, it's usually because your results on other less invasive tests have signaled that there may be pressure building up in your right heart.

Echocardiogram



An echocardiogram (also known as an "Echo") is a common noninvasive test that uses soundwaves (ultrasound) to create an image of your heart and evaluate its size and shape. An Echo can measure the size of your heart and how well *it* squeezes and relaxes, but it can't directly measure the pressure in your heart—that's something only a right heart cath can do. An Echo can indicate the need for a right heart cath to look more closely at the pressures in your right heart.

Right heart cath



To get a more in-depth and accurate measure of the pressure in your heart and lungs, your HCP will use a right heart cath. It's kind of like a suspicious mole: Your healthcare team can tell just by looking that the mole may not be normal, but they need to study the cells *inside* of the mole before they know whether it's something to be concerned about.

What information does a right heart cath provide?

A right heart cath procedure measures pressures inside your right heart and pulmonary artery (the main blood vessel in your lungs).

The results give your healthcare team important information about the condition of your heart and lungs. The section below describes some of the information gathered from a right heart cath that you may want to discuss with your healthcare team. Keep in mind that your results can change over time, so your healthcare team may recommend one or more right heart caths in the future.

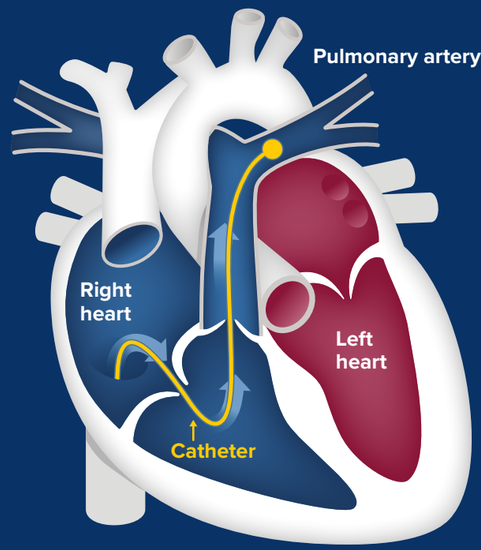
Information gathered from a right heart cath

Pulmonary vascular resistance (PVR)
Indication of how difficult it is for blood to flow through the arteries that supply blood to the lungs

Pulmonary artery pressure (PAP)
Pressure measured in your pulmonary artery when your heart squeezes and relaxes

Pulmonary capillary wedge pressure (PCWP)
Pressure measured in the pulmonary artery that provides an indirect measure of pressure in the left upper chamber of the heart

Right atrial pressure (RAP)
Pressure measured in the upper right heart that indicates the amount of blood returning to the heart from the body



Your healthcare team may also use right heart cath measurements to calculate other information that helps to inform how well your heart and lungs are working together

Cardiac output (CO)
Amount of blood your heart pumps per minute

Cardiac index (CI)
Measurement of cardiac output based on your body weight and height

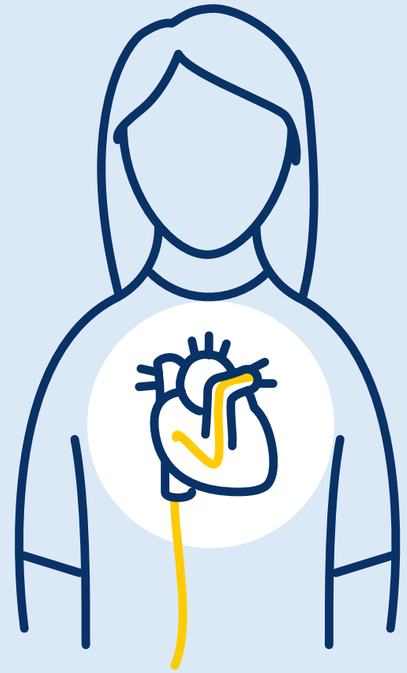
How is a right heart cath different from a blood pressure measurement?

Think of a right heart cath as a type of blood pressure measuring system.

You're probably familiar with having your systemic (ie, whole body) blood pressure taken with a cuff around your arm. When the cuff inflates, it squeezes the artery in your arm and measures the blood pressure inside it. Since it's not possible to put a cuff around your pulmonary artery or your heart, your healthcare team will measure the pressure from inside your body with a right heart cath procedure. It's also important to know that the pressures measured from a right heart cath should be much lower than the ones that you typically see from a systemic blood pressure reading.

Systemic blood pressure is measured from outside the body

Normal systemic blood pressure:
Less than 120/80 mm Hg



Heart and lung blood pressures are measured from inside the body

Normal pulmonary artery pressure:
Less than 14 mm Hg

What can I expect during a right heart cath?

A right heart cath takes place at a hospital in a cardiac catheterization laboratory (sometimes known as a "cath lab") by a specially trained healthcare team, which typically includes a cardiologist or pulmonologist (heart and lung doctor, respectively).

You will be awake during the right heart cath, but you may be given medicine to help you relax before the procedure starts. The procedure itself generally takes about an hour, but additional time may be needed before and after your procedure.

The right heart cath procedure starts with the insertion of a thin, hollow tube (called a "catheter") into a vein, typically in your wrist or groin. The skin around where the catheter is inserted is numbed with an anesthetic, but it's possible that you may feel some discomfort or pressure. Once in the vein, the catheter flows with your blood and is guided to your heart. Once in the heart, the catheter collects measurements inside your heart and blood vessels. The catheter is removed at the end of the procedure, and a bandage is placed where the tube was inserted.

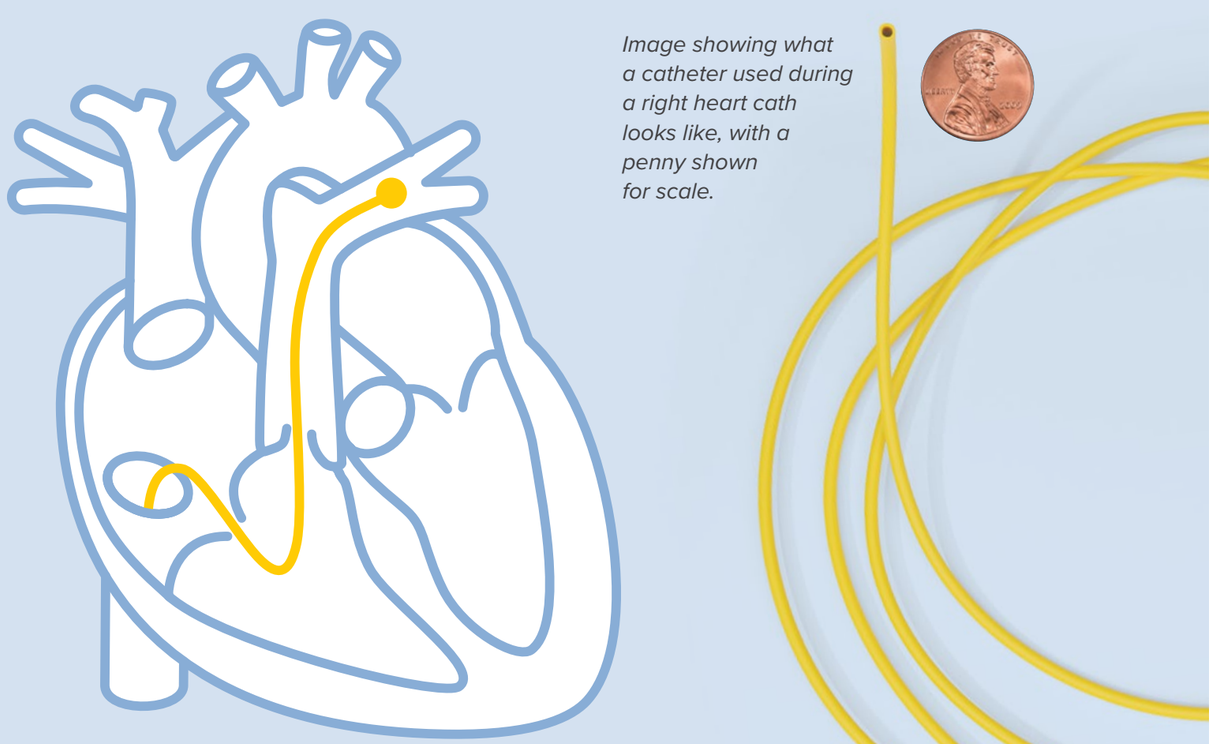


Image showing what a catheter used during a right heart cath looks like, with a penny shown for scale.

What are the risks of a right heart cath?

A right heart cath is a generally safe procedure. As with any procedure, a right heart cath does come with risks.

Some potential risks of a right heart cath include bruising where the catheter was placed, along with bleeding and injury to the vein.

On very rare occasions, other complications may occur. Your healthcare team will review all the risks with you before the procedure. If you have any questions or concerns, be sure to talk with your healthcare team about them.

Prepare for your upcoming right heart cath

Before your right heart cath, you'll receive instructions on how to prepare for the procedure from your healthcare team's office or from the catheterization lab, some of which may include:

- [ ] Not eating or drinking anything after midnight and within 8 hours of the procedure
- [ ] Notifying your healthcare team if you:
  - Are currently taking any blood-thinning medications (ie, warfarin, aspirin, or other medicines that may affect blood clotting)
  - Have a history of bleeding disorders
- [ ] Telling your healthcare team about all medications and supplements you are currently taking and any known drug allergies
- [ ] Arranging transportation to and from the hospital as you will not be able to drive after the procedure
- [ ] Rescheduling work or other activities that require attention to detail or strenuous effort, until your healthcare team says it is okay to do so
- [ ] Scheduling a follow-up appointment to discuss your results with the doctor who ordered your right heart cath as soon as you have scheduled your procedure with the catheterization lab

The information presented here is for educational purposes only and is not intended as professional medical advice. Speak with your healthcare team for specific instructions and always discuss any questions you may have with them.

My Appointment Information

My Upcoming Right Heart Cath Appointment

Date of right heart cath: ____ /____ /____

Time: ____ : ____

Catheterization lab location: _____

_____

Address: _____

_____

Phone number: (____) ____ - ____

My Follow-up Appointment With My Healthcare Team

Date of appointment: ____ /____ /____

Time: ____ : ____

Name of Provider: _____

_____

Address: _____

_____

Phone number: (____) ____ - ____

Special Instructions

_____

_____

_____

_____

Questions for My Healthcare Team

Every hospital has its own instructions for a right heart cath procedure. Here are a few questions you may want to ask your healthcare team.

You can use the blank space to write down your own questions.

- ☐ Who can I call if I have any questions before or after my procedure?
- ☐ How soon will I know my results?
- ☐ Who will tell me about my results and their meaning? Do I need to call to get the results?

_____

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