

Your doctor has asked us to perform a Balloon Test Occlusion for you. A Balloon Test Occlusion is a procedure that is done to get information about the blood supply in your brain. This is a minimally invasive procedure where a catheter (small plastic tube) is placed into an artery (usually in the leg) and guided through the blood vessels of the body to reach the brain. A special dye, called a contrast agent, is injected into the artery and this allows pictures of the blood vessels to be seen on X-ray projections. During the procedure, a balloon is used to block off an artery temporarily to observe your brain's blood supply to help determine how best to treat your condition. While the procedure is taking place, a neurologist will be testing your neurological status and an anesthesiologist will be watching your vital signs very closely. The procedure is done in the angiography suite with a special team of doctors, nurses and technologists.

### PREPARING FOR THE PROCEDURE

- We recommend that a few weeks beforehand, you meet with the doctor who will perform the procedure. Your doctor will explain the procedure in detail and address any questions you may have.
- It is important that you tell us the names of all your medications, allergies and any medical problems such as diabetes, hypertension, history of heart attacks, etc.
- If you have any allergies to IV contrast please let our office know in advance.
- Before your procedure is performed, you need to have pre-admission testing and an evaluation by one of our anesthesiologists. Our office will schedule an appointment for you.
- Your doctor may prescribe medication for you to take a few days before the procedure.
- If you are a woman of childbearing age, it is very important that we do a pregnancy test to be sure you are not pregnant. *If there is any possibility that you might be pregnant, please alert the staff.*

### BEFORE YOU ARRIVE

- You must not eat any solid food or drink liquids after midnight on the night before the procedure. Your procedure may be cancelled if you do.
- Remove makeup and jewelry before coming to the hospital, and leave valuables at home.
- If you are diabetic and taking insulin, take one-half your morning dose. Be sure to check your blood sugar by finger stick.
- If you take metformin (Glucophage) *do not take it for two (2) days* before your procedure. For all other oral diabetic medications, do not take them the night before and the morning of the procedure.
- If you are on blood thinners such as Coumadin, you will need permission from your Primary Care Physician (PCP) to stop this medication before your procedure. Our Nurse Coordinator will help arrange the safest way to manage this medication.

- Special Instructions:
- For any questions regarding your medication or this procedure, please call our Nurse Coordinator at **617-726-1767**.

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MASSACHUSETTS  
GENERAL HOSPITAL

Department of Interventional Neuroradiology  
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## WHAT TO EXPECT

- Your vital signs will be monitored during and after the procedure.
- An intravenous line (IV) will be placed in your arm.
- You will be attached to a cardiac monitor so that your heart can be monitored during the procedure.
- You will be given oxygen. Your oxygen saturation will be monitored to tell how much oxygen your blood is carrying.
- You will have a small catheter in your arm to monitor your blood pressure closely.
- Your groin will be cleaned and shaved, and you will be given medication to numb the skin. You may feel a brief sting before the skin feels numb.
- Your head will be secured in a special holder, and you will be covered with sterile sheets.
- During the procedure you must lie very still and follow the instructions the doctors will give you. A neurologist will ask you many questions during the test to determine your neurological functioning.
- You will be asked to hold your breath for about 10 seconds while X-ray pictures are taken. You may feel warmth in your face, but this will be brief. Do not be alarmed when the X-ray machine gets close to your face—this is how it takes the pictures.
- Near the end of the procedure you will receive a special injection of medication through the catheter to help identify the parts of the brain that were tested during the procedure. You will then be taken to the Nuclear Medicine Department to have a scan of your brain.
- The procedure takes about 3 to 4 hours.

## AFTER THE PROCEDURE

- The doctor will hold pressure on your groin for 10 – 20 minutes until the bleeding has stopped. You will then be taken to a recovery area.
- You will need to lie flat for approximately four (4) hours to be sure that the puncture site has closed.
- Your nurse will check on your groin site frequently to make sure you are not having bleeding or other complications.
- If there are no problems with the puncture site, you will slowly get up with the help of your nurse. You may feel lightheaded and dizzy if you get up too fast.
- Before you are discharged, you will be given detailed instructions to help you once you go home.
- You will need someone with you to take you home. *We cannot discharge you without an adult escort.*
- Once home, you should take it easy for 48 hours and avoid any strenuous activity for ten (10) days.
- The doctor who ordered this test for you will contact you a few days after the procedure is done to discuss with you the next step in your treatment.



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