

Vascular Embolization

INTRODUCTION

Vascular Embolization is a method to occlude (embolize) arteries and veins either via selectively or super-selectively placed catheters or by direct percutaneous puncture of the vascular structure to be embolized

PROCEDURE

A vascular embolization involves the placement of a plastic intravenous tube (catheter) into either an artery or a vein. Some numbing medicine will be injected in the skin over the artery or vein that will be used before the catheter is inserted. Intravenous medications may also be given to you to make you more comfortable and relaxed. This is known as conscious sedation.

Once the catheter has been placed into the artery or vein, it will be advanced through the blood vessels. During this time, x-ray contrast material (x-ray dye) will be injected through the catheter and x-ray pictures taken. You may be asked to hold your breath for several seconds as these pictures are taken. During the injection of x-ray contrast material, you may experience a warm feeling or a strange taste in your mouth. Both of these sensations are temporary and will go away soon.

Once the catheter is placed into the vessel to be embolized, the embolization agents will be injected until there is no more blood flow through that vessel. At the completion of the procedure the catheter will be removed and pressure will be applied to the insertion site until the bleeding has stopped. If an artery in either your arm or leg was used for the procedure, it will be very important for you to lie flat in bed without moving your arm or leg for up to six hours.

RISKS

Risks associated with the procedure include pain or discomfort at the catheter insertion site, bleeding at the site, injury to a blood vessel, infection which may result in an infection of the blood stream, the development of a blood clot (embolization) in other areas of your body, and stroke. When a vessel is blocked to decrease blood flow, some of the tissue supplied by that vessel may not get enough blood. This may result in damage or death of the tissue (necrosis). In addition, the blood flow to other, not-targeted areas may become diminished which may result injury to the organs or tissues in that area. Risks associated with the x-ray contrast material include an allergic reaction and reduced kidney function. The medications used for the conscious sedation are associated with the risks of aspiration (inhaling food or liquid into your lungs) or respiratory depression. In addition to these potential risks associated with the procedure, the x-ray contrast material, and the conscious sedation medications, there may be other unpredictable risks including death.

ALTERNATIVES

There may be other methods to treat your condition. If you are unsure about undergoing a vascular embolization, please discuss these other alternatives with your physician.