Peripheral Thrombolysis

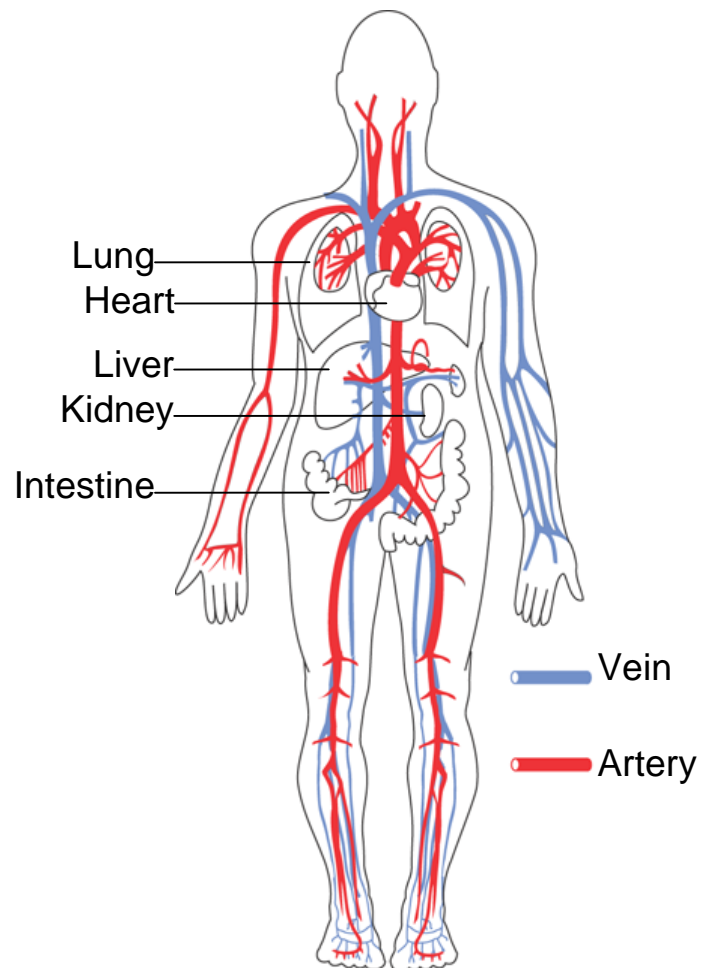## What is peripheral thrombolysis?

Peripheral thrombolysis is a treatment used to dissolve a blood clot in an artery or vein.

An artery is a blood vessel that brings blood to your leg or arm.

A vein is a blood vessel that carries blood from your leg or arm back to your heart.

There is a blood clot in your

_____

affecting the blood supply to your

_____.

Your doctor has ordered a clot busting medication to dissolve your blood clot.

Lung
Heart
Liver
Kidney
Intestine

Vein
Artery

How do I get ready for peripheral thrombolysis?

Before your procedure, you will be asked some questions about your:

- past health
- problems with bleeding
- medications
- allergies

You will also have:

- blood tests
- urine tests
- an ECG
- your blood pressure taken
- your heart rate and breathing rate measured

How is peripheral thrombolysis done?

In the Diagnostic Imaging Department:

- An area of skin is shaved and cleaned with an antiseptic.

- The radiologist injects a local anesthetic into the skin to "numb" the shaved area.

- A thin flexible tube called a catheter is placed in your groin or arm in the numbed area. You may feel some pressure when the tube is inserted.

- The radiologist injects contrast (x-ray dye) through the catheter to see the blood vessel and the location of the clot. You may feel heat throughout your body when the contrast is injected.

- With the aid of an x-ray machine, the catheter is slowly moved through the blood vessel until it reaches the blood clot.

- Clot busting medication is now given through the catheter to dissolve the blood clot.

> **If you have discomfort, you will be given pain control medication. Tell the doctor or nurse if you feel pain.**

On the ward:

- You will then be transferred to a ward that specializes in this procedure.
- You may be given the clot busting medication for up to 2 days. You may stay in the hospital for 1 to 2 days after the medication is stopped.
- You will be attached to special equipment to monitor your heart and blood pressure. Your blood pressure, pulses and the catheter insertion site are checked often.
- You may feel increased pain in your limb while receiving this medication. This is normal. Tell your nurse if this happens. You may have medication for the pain.
- Your family can visit you on the ward.

Will I be able to eat while I am getting the medication?

You cannot eat solid food. You can have clear fluids while you get the medication. Some examples of clear fluids include apple juice, water, gingerale, broth and tea or coffee without milk.

Will I be able to move my leg or arm while getting the medication?

No, you need to keep your leg or arm straight and lie flat on your back. You should not bend your knee or elbow. This is to prevent any movement of the catheter while it delivers the medication.

Will I be able to use the toilet?

No. You will have a special catheter inserted into your bladder so you do not need to pass urine. You must call a nurse for a bedpan if you need to have a bowel movement.

How long will I have the tube in my groin or arm?

You will return to Diagnostic Imaging for contrast injections a number of times. The radiologist needs to see if the blood clot is dissolved. This helps the doctor decide how long you will need the medication.

How is the catheter removed?

- The catheter line will be removed on the ward.

- Pressure will be applied to the puncture site.

- A dressing will then be put on the site.

- You will keep your leg or arm straight and lie flat for 4 hours. This promotes healing.

- The nurses will check your blood pressure, pulses and the skin around the insertion site.

Call your nurse right away if you have any of these signs:

- bright red blood on the dressing

- a change in the colour or feeling in your arm or leg

- discomfort in your arm, leg or back

- a headache

What happens next?

Other treatments and follow-up appointments will be discussed with you before you go home.

When will I go home?

Ask a member of your health care team when you can go home.