Questions to ask your cardiologist:

- 
- 
- 
- 
- 
- 
- 
- 
- 
- 
-
A cardiac catheterization is performed by a highly trained cardiologist, radiologic technologist(s), and nurse(s). You will be awake and able to follow instructions during the catheterization. You may feel groggy from the mild sedative given to help you relax. Because a local anesthesia is used to numb your groin near the site where the catheter is inserted, the only sensation should be one of pressure at the site. You may experience some discomfort from remaining still for the procedure. The catheter will be removed after the procedure. To prevent bleeding, a firm pressure may be applied at the insertion site. You will be asked to lie flat on your back for a few hours after the procedure to avoid bleeding. This may cause some mild back discomfort.

What can loved ones expect?
A family member or friend may come with you for your cardiac catheterization. They will be able to sit with you in the Outpatient Department before and after the procedure. Because you may have taken medication to help you relax, they may find you to be a little groggy, but able to talk and carry on a conversation. During the procedure family members may wait in the waiting room. Our staff will be happy to give them directions to a site where you may obtain coffee or food if they wish. Their wait will be around one hour. With your permission, your cardiologist will let your loved ones know how you are doing and how the procedure went.

What to expect after the procedure:
When the procedure is finished, you will return to the Outpatient Department where your blood pressure, heart rhythm, and oxygen levels will continue to be monitored. This open-concept room will provide direct nursing supervision for you after the procedure. You may be given a light lunch and something to drink. You will be lying flat with your head only slightly elevated for the next few hours. After the cardiac catheterization you may sense a fullness in the groin. There can also be some mild bruising. Depending on whether or not your cardiologist is able to use a closure device that quickly seals the incision site, you may be in the Outpatient Department for two to six hours. When you are ready to go home, you will be given a list of instructions to help you understand your limitations for the next few days.

When will I get the results?
Your cardiologist should give preliminary results of the test to you and your loved ones at the time of the test. The results of your cardiac catheterization may be used by your cardiologist to refine your treatment plan. This may include changing your medication or recommending additional procedures, if a problem should be discovered.

What are my restrictions after the procedure?
Someone will have to drive you home. If you should have any discomfort, you may take Tylenol, but we do not recommend aspirin or large doses of Motrin. When you get home, do not participate in strenuous activity for two days. We do not recommend showering for at least 24 hours. Try to limit yourself to one flight of stairs. If you feel swelling, or a lump formation, or if you are bleeding, press on the area with your fingers and notify your physician or go to the St. Mary's Emergency Room (777-8120).

The next day you may be up and around but refrain strenuous activity. You may ride in a car, but do not drive. It is best to take it easy for the next few days. If you should have a fever, increasing pain, tenderness, redness, or swelling at the procedure site, please notify your cardiologist.