

Patient's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Learning about ...

# Peripheral Thrombolysis

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## 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.

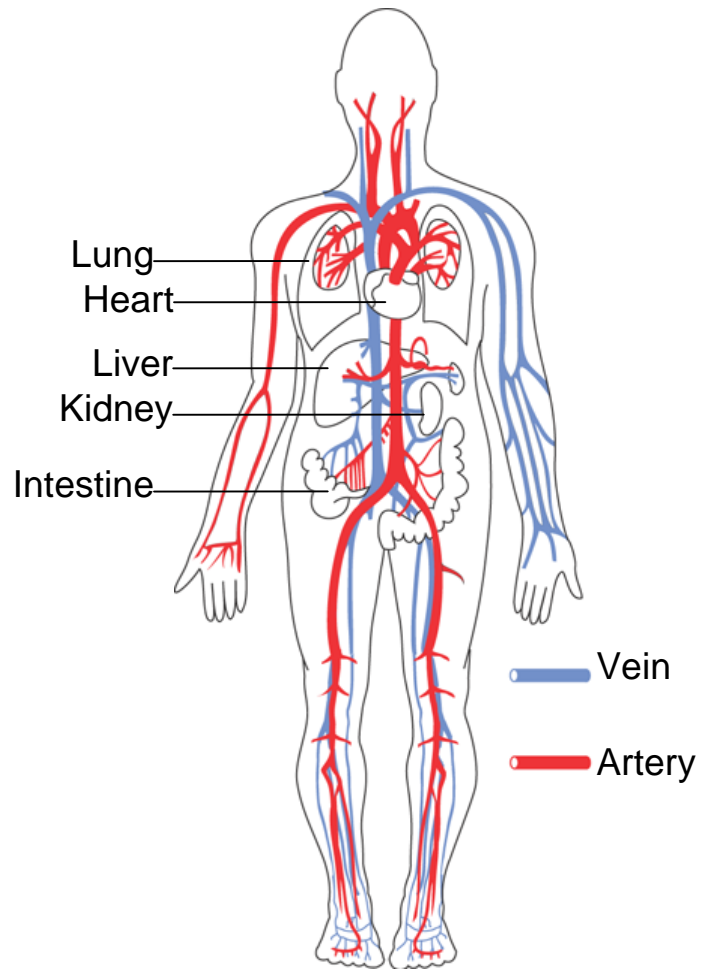
There is a blood clot in your

\_\_\_\_\_

affecting the blood supply to your

\_\_\_\_\_.

Your doctor has ordered a medication to dissolve the clot.



## 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 the following done:

- blood tests
- urine tests
- an ECG
- your blood pressure taken
- your heart rate and breathing rate measured
- an intravenous or IV started
- your groin or arm shaved

## How is peripheral thrombolysis done?

### 1. Insertion of the tube:

- The shaved area is cleaned with an antiseptic.
- Your doctor injects a local anesthetic into the skin to “numb” the shaved area. You will feel a small needle pinch as the doctor freezes the area.
- A soft narrow tube is placed in your groin or arm. You may feel some pressure as the doctor inserts the tube.
- With the aid of an x-ray machine, the tube is slowly moved through the blood vessel until it reaches the clot.
- The doctor injects dye through the tube to see the blood vessel and the location of the clot.
- The tube is put near the clot. Medication to break up the clot is given through this tube.

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

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## 2. Delivery of the thrombolysis medication:

- You will go to a nursing unit that specializes in this procedure. You are given medication through the tube in your groin or arm for up to 3 days. You stay in the nursing unit for 1 to 2 days after medication is stopped.
- You are attached to special equipment to monitor your heart and medications are given intravenously.
- You will feel heat throughout your body when the dye is injected.
- You may feel increased pain in the limb with the clot. This is normal. Tell the nurse if this happens.
- Your blood pressure, pulses and the area of the tube insertion site are checked often.
- Your family can visit you in the nursing unit.

### **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 after the procedure?**

You will need to keep your leg or arm straight and lie flat on your back while the tube is in. You will not be able to bend your knee or elbow. This is to prevent any movement of the tube.

You will need to call a nurse for a bedpan.

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

Your doctor will decide how long the medication will be given through the tube.

You will return to the X-ray Department for repeat dye injections through the tube to see if the medication is breaking down the clot. This will help the doctor decide how long you will need to get the medication. The usual time is up to 3 days.

## Where will the tube be removed?

- The tube will be removed in the nursing unit by the doctor or nurse.
- 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 6 to 8 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 your doctor when you can go home.

Arrange to have someone pick you up at 9:00 a.m. the day you leave the hospital.