

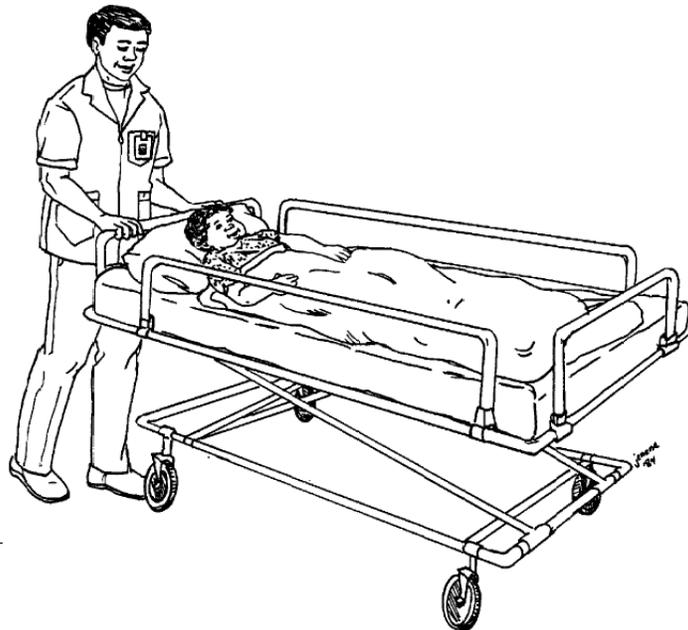


## CARDIAC CATHETERIZATION

A cardiac catheterization (CAR-dee-ack CATH-eh-ter-eye-ZA-shun), sometimes called a heart cath or cardiac cath, is a test to see how your child's heart chambers and heart valves are formed. It shows how blood flows through the large blood vessels to and from his heart. The test also measures the blood pressure and amount of oxygen in each chamber and blood vessel. This test is done by putting a long, thin tube (catheter) in a blood vessel in your child's leg or arm and moving it through the blood vessel to the chambers of his heart. Then X-ray movies are taken to record the flow of blood through the chambers and vessels. The test helps the doctor learn more about how well his heart is working. (Refer to the Helping Hand: *Body System: Cardiovascular*, HH-IV-53.)

### BEFORE THE TEST

For several hours before the test your child will not be allowed to eat or drink anything. His nurse will put white creamy medicine on both groin areas (the area where your legs join your body and on your hand for an IV). This medicine will be covered by plastic wrap. The area the cream touches will be numb for a while. Your child will have his cardiac cath in the Cardiology Department. Before he leaves his room to go to Cardiology, he will be dressed in a hospital gown. Your child will be given some medicine to make him sleepy. He will ride to the Cardiology Department on a hospital cart (Picture 1). Your family will wait for him in his room.



**Picture 1** Going to the Cardiology Department.

## WHAT YOU WILL SEE

In the cardiac cath room, your child will lie on a long table that can be moved up and down, back and forth, and side to side.

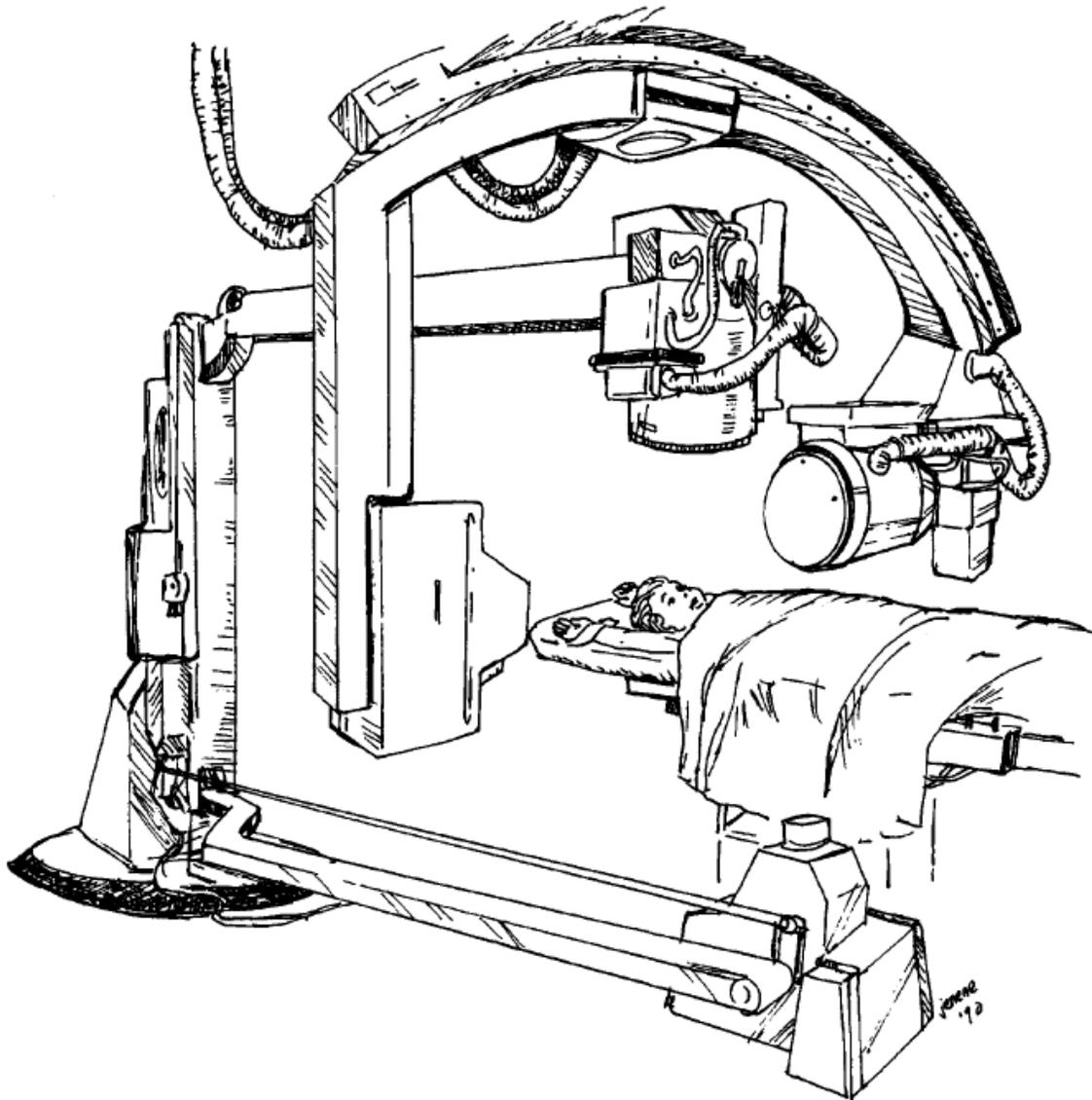
The doctor and staff wear blue clothes and hats. They also wear masks to cover their mouths and noses. The special clothes help keep germs away from your child. (Picture 2).

There will be a big camera above your child's bed and two cameras beside him. (Picture 3).

His doctor, nurse, and technicians can see pictures of his heart on a TV screen.



**Picture 2** The doctor and other staff wear special clothes.



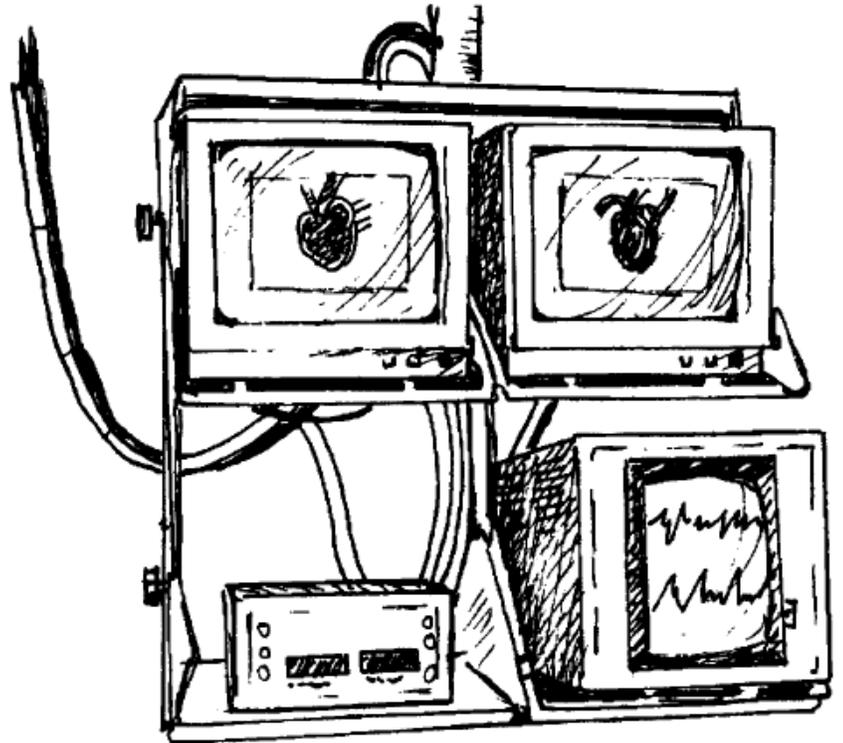
**Picture 3** The big cameras in the cardiac cath room.

## GETTING READY

- Your child may be given more medicine to make him sleepier. The test will seem to go faster if he goes to sleep.
- Before he goes to sleep, some adhesive tape will be put on his arms and legs. The tape holds his hands over his head and helps keep his legs straight. His arms will be over his head so pictures can be taken at his side.
- Small stickers with wires attached to them will be taped to your child's arms and legs to record his heartbeat. A small red light will also be taped to two fingers to measure the oxygen in his blood.
- The skin in both groin areas will be cleaned with a cool, brown liquid soap. This is done to get rid of germs.
- He will then be covered from his chin to his toes with a blue sheet. The sheet will have an opening where his skin was cleaned.

## HAVING THE TEST

- A small amount of medicine will be put into the skin of your child's groin to numb the area. Since his skin will be numb, he will feel only a small prick. This feeling will last a short time while he counts slowly to 10.
- Next, he will feel the doctor's fingers touching the skin on your groin to find his pulse. He may feel a little pressure when the catheter (tube) is put in.
- He will probably fall asleep during the test, but if he is awake and wants to know something, he can just ask. His questions will be answered. He may want to look at the pictures of his heart on the TV screens (Picture 4).
- While your child's doctor is looking at pictures of his heart on the TV screens, he can feel the table move from side to side and back and forth.
- When it is time to take pictures, your child will hear the cameras' motors working. The loud motor noises sound something like a blender or cake mixer motor. It is very important for him to hold still during this part of the test.



**Picture 4** The TV screens show pictures of your child's heart.

## AFTER THE TEST

The doctor will take the catheters (tubes) out and will push hard on your child's leg so that he does not bleed or get a big bruise. The blue sheet and all of the tape will be taken off. A bandage will be put on his skin where the catheter had been. This bandage will stay on until the next day. He will ride on the cart back to his room where his family will be waiting for him.

## WHAT HAPPENS IN THE NEXT 6 TO 8 HOURS

- Your child will need to stay in bed and lie flat for 6 to 8 hours after the test (Picture 5). This will allow time for the place on his groin to start healing.
- A nurse will come often to check his bandage, feel his pulse, listen to his heart, and take his blood pressure.
- When your child is awake he may have something to drink. At first he will have soda pop, apple juice, or water. A little while after having something to drink, he may have some food.
- Instead of walking to the bathroom, your child will use a bedpan or urinal in bed.

## BEFORE YOU GO HOME

- Your child's doctor will come to tell you and him the results of his test.
- If he stays overnight, his bandage will be changed before he goes home.
- If your child goes home the night of his cardiac cath, a parent can take his bandage off the next morning and put on a Band-Aid. You will be told how to take the bandage off.

## WHEN YOU GO HOME

- The night of your child's cardiac cath, he will need to rest in bed. He can watch TV, read, listen to stories, or listen to music.
- The day after his cardiac cath, he may walk around, but he **should not** ride a bike, climb many stairs, or play rough games.
- Your child can return to his normal activities including school 2 to 3 days after the cardiac cath. He should wait 2 to 3 more days before he goes to gym class.
- He will have a Band-Aid on his groin for 3 to 4 days. Be sure to change the Band-Aid at least once a day. He may have a bruise, but this will go away in a week or so.



**Picture 5** Your child will need to rest in bed for 6 to 8 hours after the test.

## WHEN TO CALL THE DOCTOR

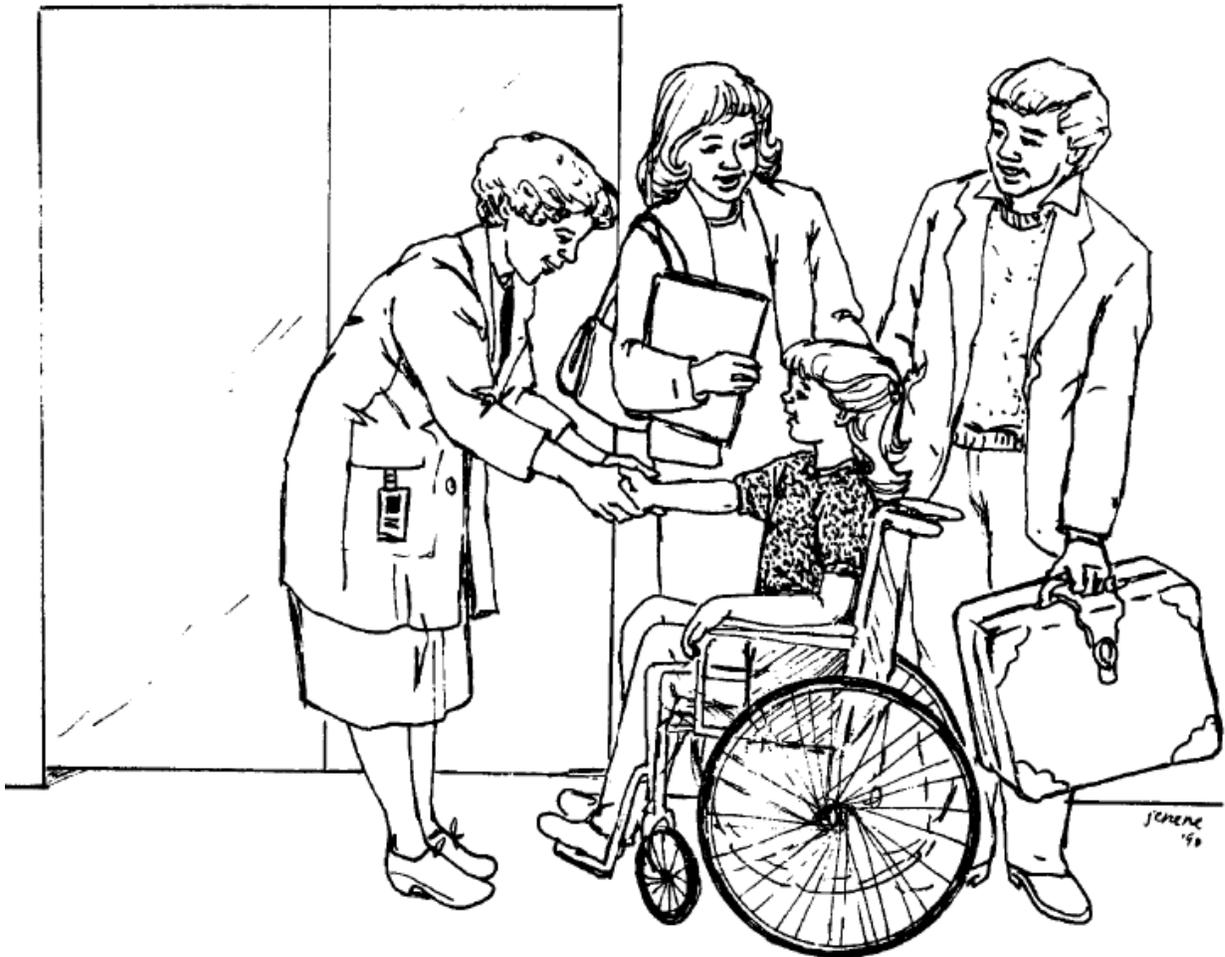
Call the doctor if any of the following happens:

- If there is bleeding through the bandage.
- If there is yellow or white drainage in the area of the bandage.
- If the area becomes red or swollen.
- If your child has a fever over 102° F.

## IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS

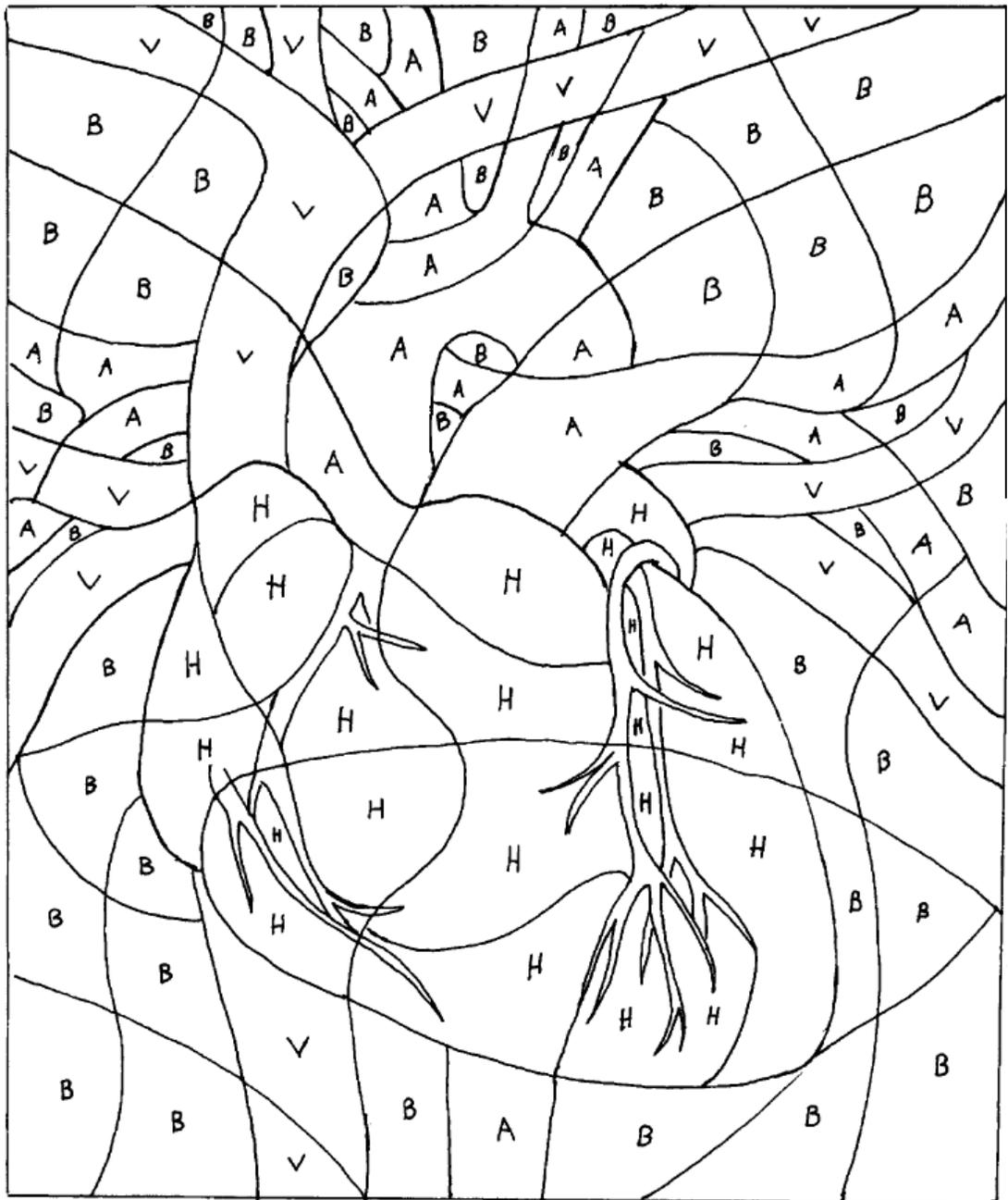
- Doctor's office phone number: Monday through Friday, 8:00 am to 4:30 pm, call (614) 722-2530. After hours call (614) 722-2000.
- Clinical nurse specialist: Call the Nationwide Children's Hospital operator at (614) 722-2000 and ask for \_\_\_\_\_. (beeper number) \_\_\_\_\_.

If you have any questions, be sure to ask the doctor or nurse.



**Picture 6** Going home after your child's cardiac catheterization.

WHAT DO YOU SEE?



H is for Heart. To see what your child's heart looks like, color the H spaces RED.

A is for Artery. Arteries carry blood from your child's heart to his body. Color A's ORANGE.

V is for Vein. Veins carry blood back to his heart. Color V spaces BLUE.

B is for Body. See how your child's heart looks inside his body. Color B spaces YELLOW.