Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ’s):

What is a Cardiac Catheterization?
A cardiac cath is a test that shows how well your heart is working and if there are any blockages in the coronary arteries of the heart. It lasts about an hour, and you don’t have to be put to sleep.

How is a Cardiac Cath done?
During a Cath, a long thin tube (catheter) is moved through a blood vessel until it reaches the heart. Once the tube is in place, dye is put in and pictures are made of the heart and arteries.

How do I prepare for my test and what can I expect?
You will be asked about your health, both past and present. At this time, tell your doctor of any allergies you have to foods, medicines or x-ray dye (such as that used with kidney x-rays). If you are pregnant or think you might be, tell your doctor or nurse. You will have blood tests and an ECG (electrocardiogram). A chest x-ray may also be needed. You will also need to know the names and dosage of your medications. Take your medicine bottles or a current list of your medicines with you to the hospital. Do not eat or drink anything for 8 hours before the Cath. This lowers the chance of nausea or vomiting during the test. Any hair around the place where the catheter will be put in is clipped away and the skin scrubbed with a special soap. You will wear a hospital gown for the Cath. Before leaving your room you will be asked to go to the bathroom and to leave behind slippers, clothing and jewelry.

What happens during the test?
In the Cath lab, you lie on a bed under an x-ray camera. Small pads (electrodes) are put on your chest to hook you up to an ECG machine. This shows your heartbeat during the Cath. Nearby are TV screens where you may watch pictures of your heart or your ECG. A small needle is placed in an arm vein so that medicines can be given as needed. Often a medicine is given to relax you. If you are allergic to x-ray dye, you are given a special medicine to reduce or prevent a reaction. The catheter may be inserted in an artery or vein in the groin or arm. You may feel burning or stinging as medicine is injected in the skin over the blood vessel. When the skin is numb, a needle is placed in the blood vessel. You may feel some pressure, but pain is not likely. Once the tip of the needle is in place, a guide wire is moved through the needle into the artery or vein. The catheter is a long, very thin tube. It is passed over the wire to the heart with out pain. Blood vessels don’t have fibers. A small needle is placed in an arm vein so that medicines can be given as needed. Often medicine is given to relax you. The catheter is removed. The total heart Cath lasts about 1 to 1 1/2 hours. You may eat and drink, as you like right after the Cath.

Are there any restrictions after the test is done?
If the groin artery was used, firm pressure is applied to the site for 10 to 20 minutes. You will slide onto a stretcher or bed, without bending your groin. Bed rest is needed for at least 4 to 6 hours. You must limit your movements during bed rest. A sheet may be placed over the knee of the leg used for the Cath to remind you not to bend it. The arms and other leg may move freely. You cannot sit up or turn to the side until a tight seal forms. When needed, you must use a urinal or bedpan without bending the groin. If you have to cough or sneeze, put your fingers over the pressure bandage, and hold it firmly. You may bend your foot or wiggle your toes on the leg used for the heart Cath. Do not hold the leg stiff, just straight. If an arm artery or vein was used, a few stitches may be needed in the blood vessel and skin after the catheter is removed. Do not bend the arm sharply for a number of hours and do not lift anything heavy until the soreness is gone. You may walk to the bathroom (with help at first) and around in your room as you feel like it.

Other Things to know
Tell the nurse of any discomfort in your neck, chest, jaw, arms or upper back. Also let your nurse know if you feel short of breath, weak or dizzy. These feelings do not happen often and may be relieved with medicines.

A cardiac Cath is considered a safe procedure, but any work done inside a blood vessel carries a small amount of risk of problems. Your doctor will discuss any risks that cardiac Cath might hold for you.

For More Information call:
Cardiology 326-2346

HOURS OF OPERATION
Cath Laboratory Services:
Monday-Friday 7:30am-7:00pm
Saturday 9:00am-3:00pm
The Doctors Hospital Cardiac Program combines world-class patient care, skilled specialists, new technologies and education to dramatically improve the treatment of heart disease in the Bahamas at costs that are up to 60 percent less than for comparable procedures abroad.

The first open heart surgery in the Bahamas was performed in 1994 at Doctors Hospital by Dr. Duane Sands, a member of our medical staff. Our world-class cardiac program has saved many lives. Heart Disease is the leading cause of death in the Bahamas today; the Doctors Hospital cardiac program is our tool for preventing and treating it.

Cardiovascular Surgery
The Doctors Hospital Cardiac Program is a full service, multidisciplinary program that cares for public and private patients. It combines special diagnostic procedures with education, advanced patient care, and rehabilitative therapy. Physicians from all cardiac care disciplines work together at Doctors Hospital to treat heart patients, utilizing the latest medical knowledge, and drawing on the hospital’s advanced diagnostic and treatment services. Diagnostic procedures offered in the cardiac program include pediatric and adult cardiac surgery, cardiac catheterization, coronary angioplasty and stent procedures, and pacemaker insertion (temporary and permanent). All of these procedures, except for the surgeries, are performed in our catheterization lab, which is outfitted with the latest medical equipment.

In the Bahamas, cardiothoracic surgery is performed only at Doctors Hospital, which has the necessary equipment and staff to support such complex procedures.

Heart Catheterisation
The Cath Lab at Doctors Hospital is a vital part of the cardiac programme. Trained diagnosticians work with doctors, nurses and other health professionals using the latest techniques. This million-dollar investment allows our physicians to insert catheters into coronary arteries to detect blockages and provide critical information for by-pass surgery. With it, the heart and major blood vessels can be examined for any structural lesions. It is the only facility of its kind in the Bahamas.

Cardiac Testing
The cardiac programme uses the hospital’s state-of-the-art equipment for electrocardiogram testing, Holter monitoring, echocardiogram testing, and exercise stress testing, to evaluate heart patients.

Operating Suite
Three operating rooms and an eight-patient recovery area are equipped with the latest surgical and anesthesia facilities - including a purified air supply - to support a variety of specialized procedures including open heart surgery.

Intensive Care
An eight-bed Critical Care Unit with specially trained doctors and nurses and sophisticated monitoring equipment is available for heart patients who need post-operative or critical care.

Recovery
The 72-bed Medical/Surgical Unit at Doctors Hospital allows patients to recover from surgery, or to undertake medical therapy for heart disease, in a superior clinical environment. Clean, comfortable, and air-condition private and semi private rooms are serviced by a skilled and caring nursing staff. All the facilities and personnel of a modern acute care hospital are available to support recovery.

Cardiology Services

Cardiac Team
The Cardiac team at Doctors Hospital consists of American-trained specialists:


Dr. Henry Coleman – Cardiothoracic Surgeon. Advanced training at Hahnemann Medical College in Pennsylvania.

Dr. Jerome Lightbourne – Pediatric Cardiologist. Advanced training at the University of Miami's Jackson Memorial Hospital in Florida.

Dr. Conville Brown – Adult Cardiologist. American Board Certified in Internal Medicine and Cardiovascular Disease. Advanced training at Beth Israel Medical Centre in New Jersey. First fellow in The Bahamas.

Dr. Patrick Cargill – Cardiologist, Invasive and Non-invasive Cardiology. Member American Board Certified in Internal Medicine and Cardiology.


Dr. Sy Pierre – Cardiac Anesthesiologist. Advanced training at Cooke County Hospital in Chicago. Diplomate American Board of Anesthesiology.

Dr. Mark Weech – Pediatric Cardiac Anesthesiologist. Advanced training at the University of Michigan.

Dr. Bimal Francis – International Cardiologist. Advanced Training in India.