

Procedures

Angiogram

An angiogram is completed in the x-ray department. A dye (contrast) is injected into a blood vessel and x-rays are taken to visualise specific areas of the body (e.g. cerebral angiogram visualises the vessels in the brain).

Arterial blood gases (ABGs)

A blood test taken from a catheter placed in an artery (arterial line). It gives information on the levels of oxygen and carbon dioxide in the blood, as well as other results on the patient's status.

Arterial line

A small catheter is inserted into an artery in the patient's arm or leg. It continuously monitors the patient's blood pressure and allows staff to take blood for testing.

Bronchoscopy

A flexible tube (scope) is inserted through the patient's breathing tube to inspect the airways, remove secretions and take specimens.

Central line

This is a fine catheter that is inserted into a large vein in the neck, upper chest or groin. It has multiple openings at each end to deliver numerous fluids and drugs. Some medications can only be delivered through a central line.

Computed tomography (CT/Cat scan)

These are specific x-ray tests that produce cross-sectional images of the body using x-rays and a computer.

Dialysis

The patient is connected to a machine via a catheter and tubing that allows the blood to be filtered to remove toxic substances and fluid. This is necessary when the kidneys have failed or are not working effectively during the patient's illness. Mostly it is a temporary measure.

Echocardiography/Ultrasound

This is a test that uses sound waves to create a picture of the heart and various organs and structures in the body. It can be done non-invasively through the skin or through the oesophagus. This information can be used to find defects or measure heart or organ functioning.

Electrocardiograph (ECG)

This is a device that records the electrical activity of the heart.

Electroencephalography (EEG)

This is a procedure where a number of small electrodes are placed on the patient's head to record the electrical activity of the brain. It is a non-invasive procedure.

Endotracheal tube (ETT/Breathing tube)

A tube inserted through the patient's mouth or nose to deliver air and oxygen to the patient's lungs when they are unable to breathe on their own. It is connected to a ventilator or respiratory support.

External ventricular drain (EVD)

A small catheter is placed into the ventricles of the brain to drain fluid to reduce the pressure on the brain.

Intercostal catheter (ICC/Chest drain)

A tube attached to a drainage container is inserted into the chest to drain fluid or air from around the lung.

Intracranial pressure (ICP) monitor

A small catheter is inserted into the brain to monitor pressure. When this is connected to a drainage system, it can remove fluid that causes increased pressure within the skull.

Magnetic resonance imaging (MRI)

It is a scan used for the medical imaging of the body. It is able to take pictures of body tissues that do not show up on x-ray.

Monitor

Looks like a computer screen. It displays some of the body's major functions by continuous waveforms or numbers. The screen can display a patient's heart rate, blood pressure, oxygen levels and temperature.

Nasogastric tube

A tube inserted through the nose or mouth that runs down the back of the throat in the food pipe (oesophagus) to the stomach. It is used to deliver nutrition and medications to the patient or to drain stomach contents.

Sequential Compression Devices (SCUDS)

These are air filled stockings that are attached to a small machine that inflate and deflate to help move the blood in the patient's legs and reduce the risk of unwanted clots forming.

Suctioning

A long thin tube is inserted into the patient's breathing tube (ETT) to clear away any sputum or mucous from the lungs. This is done regularly and may make the patient cough.

TED anti-embolic stockings (TEDS)

Stockings worn to prevent deep vein thrombosis in patients who are ill and have reduced mobilisation.

Tracheostomy

A tube inserted into the patient's neck and sits in their airway. It is usually inserted after the patient has had an ETT for a period of time and is still requiring breathing support or secretion management.

Ultrasound

A scanner that uses high frequency sound waves to obtain images from inside the body.

Urinary Catheter

A catheter placed inside the patient's bladder and connected to a drainage bag to accurately measure urine output.

Vascath

A catheter that is inserted into a large vein with two openings at each end. It is generally used if the patient is requiring dialysis.

Ventilator (Breathing machine)

A machine that assists or completely takes over a patient's breathing when they are not capable of doing it on their own. This is usually a temporary measure.