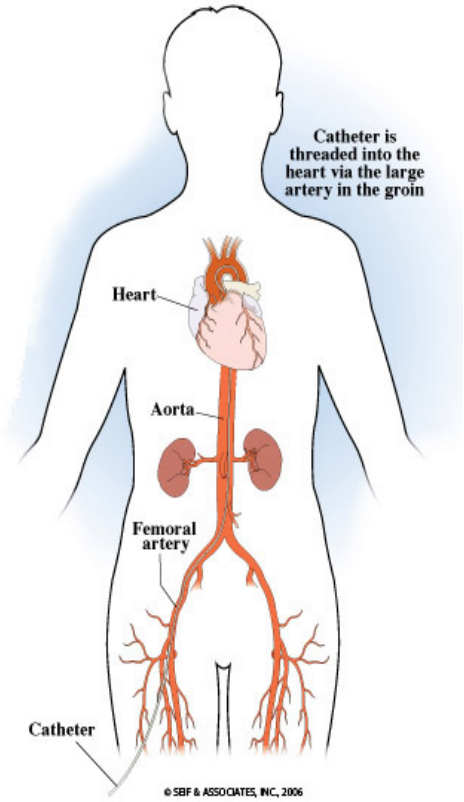
Femoral Artery Pseudoaneurysm

FAP is a rare complication of testing for heart problems (*angiogram*) when an artery is punctured to perform an internal blood vessel evaluation. The site does not seal and blood leaks out into the surrounding tissues. Instead of a clot, a bump or bulge forms at the site and blood flows in and out of it. This may put pressure on the local tissue resulting in swelling, throbbing, discomfort and bruising.



It most commonly follows a procedure such as heart catheterization that requires the careful puncture of an artery to see blood flow in the vessels. This typically occurs in an artery in the groin (*femoral*) but may also involve the artery in the bend of the arm at the elbow (*brachial*), depending on which site was chosen.

SYMPTOMS

- A mass with pulses at the site of insertion.
- Bruising and discoloration.
- Discomfort and tenderness.
- Increased swelling.
- Occurs 1 to 4 days after a procedure.

A Doppler ultrasound study is used to diagnose the FAP by examining the blood flow in the area.

TREATMENT OPTIONS

- **Ultrasound** is used to monitor the artery as pressure is held at the site to close the leak.
- A blood clotting agent such as **thrombin** is injected into the area where the FAP is located.
- A small **surgery** may be needed to repair the artery if these two treatments do not work.
- Possible complications of these treatments include:
  - Blood clots traveling beyond the artery to smaller vessels such as the toes.
  - Numbness from either pressure held at the site or from leakage of blood into the surrounding tissues.
  - Adverse reaction to thrombin.
  - Rarely, the artery may rupture.

Discuss the risks and benefits of treatment with your doctor. Ask questions until you understand the situation and are able to make in informed decision.

AFTER THE TREATMENT:

- You will be kept in bed for several hours.
- The site will be checked frequently.
- You may stay in the hospital overnight.
- Only take medicine as directed by your caregiver.

SEEK IMMEDIATE MEDICAL CARE IF:

- You develop chest pain, shortness of breath, feel faint or pass out.
- There is bleeding, swelling, or drainage from the site.
- You have pain, discoloration, coldness or more bruising where the catheter was placed.
- An oral temperature above 101ºF (38.3ºC) develops.

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