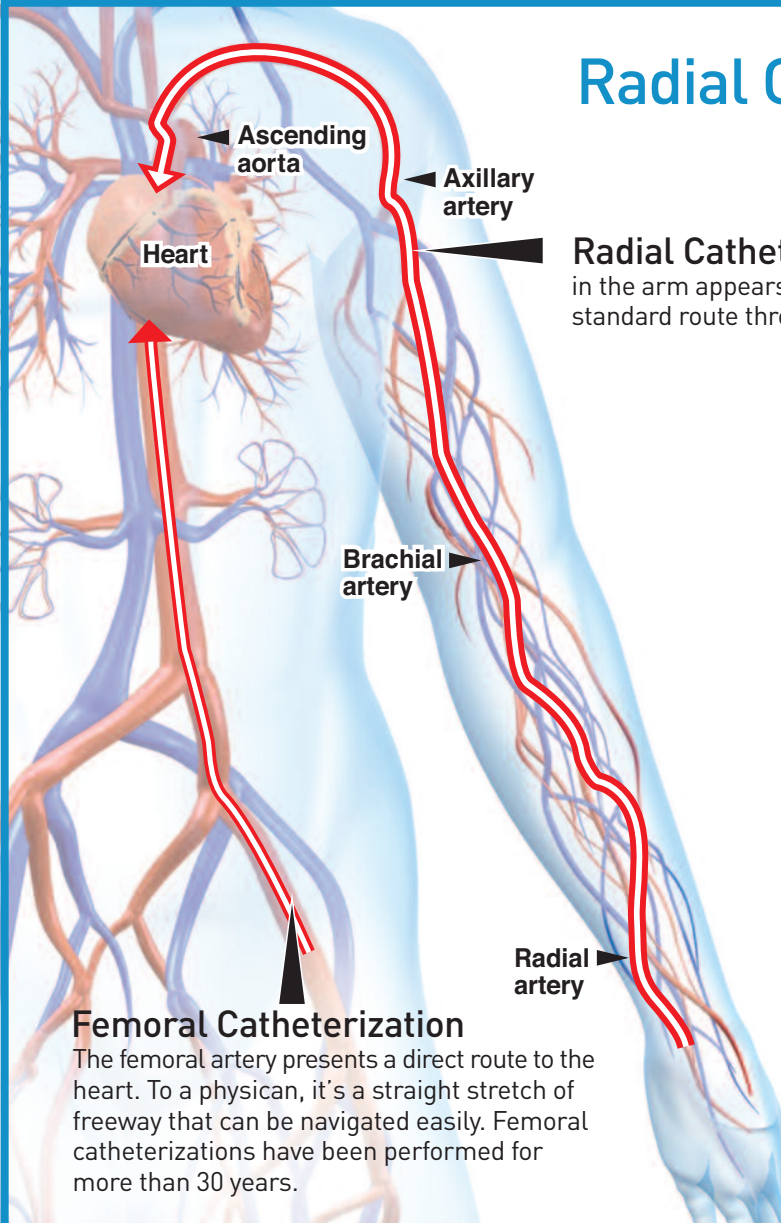


Radial Catheterization: A Closer Look



Radial Catheterization Inserting a catheter through the radial artery in the arm appears to be linked to a lower rate of bleeding complications than the standard route through the groin.

Femoral Catheterization

The femoral artery presents a direct route to the heart. To a physician, it's a straight stretch of freeway that can be navigated easily. Femoral catheterizations have been performed for more than 30 years.

1. After a local anesthetic, the cardiologist places a small needle into the radial artery of the wrist. This needle is smaller than those used for most routine bloodwork.
2. A thin wire is then placed through the needle and into the artery, gaining "access" to the blood vessel.
3. Small tubes called catheters are then placed over the wire and up through the larger arteries of the arm and shoulder, and eventually into the aorta and heart arteries. Dye is then injected into the heart arteries and, if necessary, an angioplasty or stent procedure is performed.
4. At the conclusion of the procedure, all the equipment is removed and a "zip band" is applied to the wrist. The patient is able to sit up in a chair, as subsequent bedrest is not required.

