Why am I coming to the RACPS?
Your doctor has sent you to the clinic so that your recent problems can be looked at quickly. Staff will decide whether these are being caused by a narrowing of one of the arteries supplying blood to the heart. This is called ‘angina,’ which usually feels like a tightness or heaviness in the chest which may spread to the arms, neck, jaw or back. Not everyone experiences pain or discomfort in his or her chest.

Who will I see at the clinic?
At the clinic you will be seen by a dedicated team of Cardiology Specialist Nurses, Specialised Cardiac Technical staff or Doctors. These staff are highly trained professionals, with a lot of experience dealing with patients with heart problems.

How long does it take?
You can expect to be at the clinic from 30 minutes to one-and-a-half hours.

What happens at the clinic?
Before being seen by the service, you will have your height and weight recorded and an electrocardiogram (ECG) performed. The ECG involves the placing of small sticky pads on the chest to record the activity of the heart and give staff clues about its blood supply.

On attending the service, you will have a detailed history of your symptoms taken. In preparation for attending the clinic it would be helpful to the staff if you could tell them exactly, or even write down, how often you have had your symptoms, how they make you feel, and what makes them better or worse. Please make a note of any tablets you are taking and bring this with you.

Following this talk, you will have a physical examination and the clinician will listen to your heart and lungs. You may also have your blood pressure taken, and some blood samples taken at this point. After all of these measures, the clinician will decide whether to perform an Exercise Treadmill Test (ETT).

The ETT involves walking on a treadmill while attached to the ECG equipment, and gives staff information regarding the blood supply to the heart while it is under pressure. This test is supervised by experienced cardiac technical staff and is not a test of your physical fitness! Also note that flat comfortable shoes and clothing will be helpful for this test.

On completion of all or some of these investigations, the findings will be explained to you and the likelihood of your symptoms being due to Coronary Artery Disease given. Any questions you may have will be answered at this time and any further information required will be provided.

Further investigations and/or appointments will be arranged if necessary and your family doctor will be sent a letter outlining the findings at the clinic together with a management plan.

Where is the clinic?
You will be seen at either the Royal Infirmary, Western General Hospital or St John’s Hospital and you will be informed of your appointment date, time and location by your family doctor or contacted by one of the specialist nurses.

Royal Infirmary, Little France – please come to the Outpatient Department 3 on the ground floor.

Western General Hospital – please come to the ECG department which is located on the ground floor of the Anne Ferguson Building (Porterfield Road Entrance).

St Johns Hospital, Livingston – Please come to Ward 24, which is located on the second floor.

Finally
Please in the meantime try not to worry! The majority of patients who attend the clinic are discharged with reassurance that their symptoms are highly unlikely to be due to coronary artery disease. Also a family member or friend is welcome to come to the clinic with you.

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