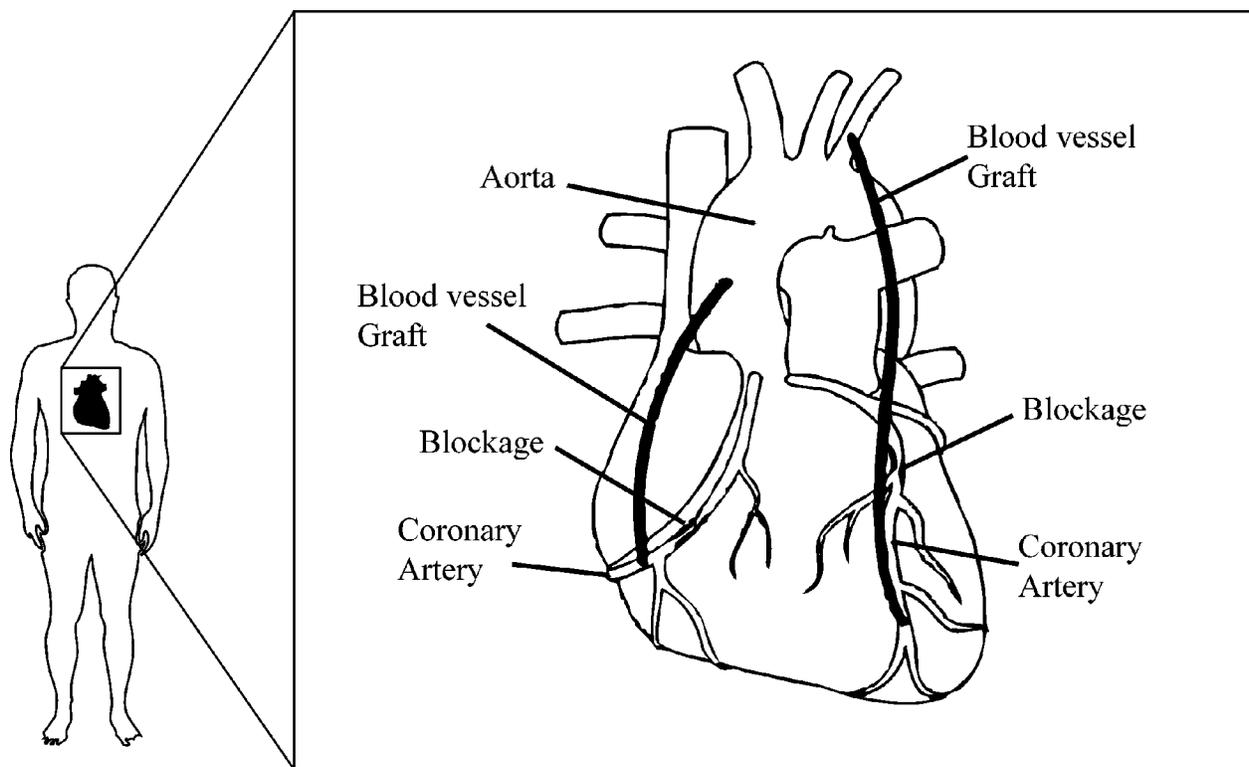


Coronary Artery Bypass Surgery

Coronary artery bypass surgery is also called bypass surgery or open heart surgery. It is done to allow blood to flow around blocked blood vessels in the heart. Coronary arteries are the blood vessels that supply the heart muscle with oxygen and nutrients. During bypass surgery, a piece of a blood vessel from the leg, arm or chest, called a graft, is removed and attached to the aorta and around the blocked blood vessel of the heart. The blocked blood vessel remains, but blood is carried around it in the new blood vessel. If there are several blocked vessels, you may have more than one bypass done.

The surgery takes 4 to 6 hours. After surgery, you will be in the recovery room for at least 2 hours before your family can see you. You will stay in the hospital 4 to 6 days.



To Prepare at Home

- Tests may be done before your surgery such as a chest x-ray, electrocardiogram (ECG or EKG) and blood tests.
- Stop smoking for at least 48 hours before surgery.
- You will be taught how to deep breathe and cough. Practice this before your surgery.
- Do not eat or drink anything, including water, after midnight before your surgery.

- You may be told to take a shower with a special soap called chlorhexidine gluconate (CHG) before your surgery. This soap may be given to you, or you will need to buy a 4-ounce bottle or larger of 4% CHG soap at a drug store. A common brand name for this soap is Hibiclens. There may be a store brand that costs less. Ask the pharmacist where to find it in the drug store. It is often with first aid supplies. You need to shower with CHG soap:

- The day before your surgery
- The morning of your surgery

Follow the instructions from your doctor or nurse on how to use CHG soap or ask for the handout, "Getting Your Skin Ready for Surgery."

Before Surgery

- You will wear a hospital gown.
- You are given medicine to help you relax.
- An IV (intravenous) is put in a vein in your arm.

During Surgery

- You will be given medicine to put you to sleep.
- A breathing tube is put into your mouth. This tube is attached to a machine that will breathe for you during surgery.
- The doctor makes an incision in the middle of your chest. Your breastbone is cut and your ribs are spread open to see your heart.
- A machine pumps blood to your body during surgery.
- A blood vessel from your leg, arm or chest, called a graft, is removed. One end of the graft is stitched to the blood vessel above the blockage. The other end is stitched to the blood vessel below the blockage.
- Your breastbone is then wired back together. Incisions are closed with stitches and staples.

After Surgery

You are taken to an intensive care unit (ICU) for 12 to 24 hours where you will have:

- A breathing tube for a few hours
- Tubes in your chest to drain fluid from around your heart
- A catheter in your bladder to drain urine
- IVs to give you fluids and medicines

These tubes will be removed 1 to 2 days after surgery. The nursing staff will check you often.

You are then moved to a hospital room. You may have oxygen and a heart monitor for a few days. It is important to take deep breaths and cough every hour when you are awake. The staff will help you get up and walk at first. You will be taught how to care for yourself at home.

Your Care at Home

- It often takes 4 to 6 weeks to feel better.
- You may have aches and pains that affect your appetite, sleep and activities.
- Rest between activities.
- It is common to feel sad or be depressed. This should slowly get better over the next few weeks. Talk to your doctor if you feel worse or it lasts longer than 2 weeks.
- Do not drive or return to work until your doctor says it is safe.
- To help your breastbone heal during the first 6 weeks after surgery:
 - Do not lift more than 10 pounds or 4.5 kilograms. A gallon of milk weighs about 8 pounds.
 - Do not let people push or pull on your arms when they are helping you move.
 - Do not reach backwards or above your head.
 - Keep your arms close to your sides when getting in and out of a bed or chair.
 - Avoid any activity where you feel your breastbone pull.
 - Do not do strenuous activities such as vacuuming or gardening until your doctor says it is safe.
 - You may bend forward to do things such as tying your shoes.
 - You can do light household activities such as cooking or dusting.

Call your doctor right away if you have:

- Swelling or opening of your incisions
- Increase in drainage
- Fever or chills

To Help Prevent Blockage:

- Quit smoking.
- Eat a healthy diet.
- Exercise each day.
- Take your medicines as ordered.
- Get treatment for diabetes, high blood pressure or high cholesterol.

Talk to your doctor or nurse if you have any questions or concerns.