

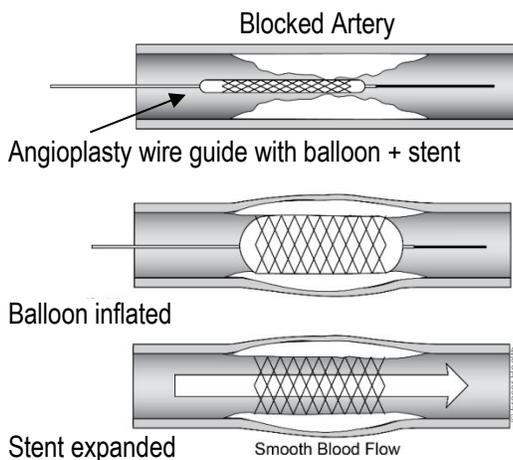
# Angioplasty and Stenting: Lower Body

## Your Surgery and Recovery at Home

You are having procedure to open blocked arteries that supply blood to your legs. Angioplasty (say *an-gee-oh-plas-tee*) uses a medical 'balloon' to make the artery larger. A stent is a small tube reinforced with wire that keeps the artery open.

The surgeon inserts a long, thin tube into a femoral artery in your groin through a small cut (the access site).

Using a special x-ray and x-ray dye, a very thin wire with the medical balloon on the end is guided to where the artery is blocked. The balloon is inflated for a few minutes, widening the artery. If needed, the surgeon leaves a stent in place to keep the artery open.



You usually go home the same day or the next day. This depends on your health before the procedure and your recovery.

### Appointments after the procedure

See your family practitioner.

**My appointment is on:** \_\_\_\_\_

See your surgeon.

**My appointment is on:** \_\_\_\_\_

### Going home checklist

- You have a ride home and someone to stay with you for 24 hours, or longer if needed.
- You know what medicine(s) to take, as well as when and how to take them.
- You know what you cannot do for 24 hours (because of anesthetic) including:
  - \* **No** driving or operating hazardous machinery
  - \* **No** drinking alcohol or using any substance or street drug
  - \* **No** making important decisions or signing legal documents

Family practitioner – Refers to family doctor or nurse practitioner

## Caring for Yourself at Home

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### Drinking and eating

Return to your normal diet.

Drink extra fluids to help flush the x-ray dye out through your kidneys (unless you have been told differently because of a medical condition).

You can get constipated if you are less active, eating less fibre, or taking opioid pain medication. To prevent constipation:

- Drink water throughout the day.
- Eat high fibre foods such as bran, prunes, whole grains, vegetables, and fruit.
- Walk and move around as much as you can.

If you continue to be constipated, talk with a pharmacist or family practitioner (family doctor or nurse practitioner) about taking a laxative.

### Activity and rest

Balance your activity and rest for the first few days. You need to do a lot of gentle walking often. Try to get 8 hours of sleep each day. Take rest breaks during the day, as needed.

You might notice some swelling of your leg. This is usually because your leg is now getting better blood flow. When sitting or lying down, rest your leg up on several pillows. The swelling should go away with time.

**Do not** lift, push, or pull anything over 5 kilograms (10 pounds) for 1 week. This includes carrying children and groceries.

Your surgeon will tell you when you can return to driving.

### Your access site

You might have some bruising or a lump around the access site. This will get smaller over time.

Change the bandage every day until the site is dry with no open spots or fluid coming out.

**Always** wash your hands before and after touching around the access site.

You can shower after the procedure.

### Until the incision is healed:

- \* No soaking up to your neck in a bath tub or hot tub
- \* No swimming
- \* No creams, lotions, or ointments on the incision (unless directed by your surgeon).

## Managing pain

You might have some pain or discomfort in the groin area for 1 to 2 days. It can take up to 2 weeks to feel back to normal.

If you have been living with pain before surgery, be sure to tell your surgeon how you manage this pain, such as with medicines, herbs, supplements, cannabis products, other substances, massage, yoga, meditation, etc. This helps your surgeon create the best plan with you for managing pain after surgery.

Your surgeon gives you instructions to take pain medicine. This might include a prescription for an opioid (narcotic).

Your pain should be at a comfortable level that allows you to move, take deep breaths, cough, and to do every day activities. Take your pain medicine regularly for the first day or so, even if you have just a little pain. Also, do other things to help ease your pain or distract you from the pain, such as slow breathing, listening to music, watching T.V.

### Non-prescription pain medicines:

- acetaminophen (Tylenol®)
- non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs)  
Examples: ibuprofen (Advil®, Motrin®)  
naproxen (Naprosyn, Aleve®)

**NSAIDs are not for everyone after surgery.** If you have (or have had) health problems such as stomach ulcers, kidney disease, or a heart condition, speak with your surgeon or family practitioner before using NSAIDs.

### Prescription pain medicines with opioids (narcotics):

- Tramacet® (tramadol and acetaminophen)
- Tylenol #3® (codeine and acetaminophen)
- Oxycocet® / Percocet® (oxycodone and acetaminophen)

**Note:** These medications also have 300 to 325mg acetaminophen in each tablet. All total, **do not** take more than 4000mg of acetaminophen in 24 hours (too much can harm your liver).

## Safe use of opioid pain medicines

If you are using any medicines that have opioids (narcotics) in them, take note of the following safety information.

- Tell your surgeon if you have sleep apnea. Opioids can make your sleep apnea worse.
- Your pain should lessen over the first week. You should not need to take opioid pain medicine for more than 1 week.
- Always use the least amount possible for the shortest amount of time.
- Common side effects include constipation, feeling sick to your stomach (nausea), a dry mouth, sweating, dizziness, and feeling drowsy.
- **Do not** crush, cut, break, chew, or dissolve opioids before taking. Doing this could cause serious harm, even death.
- While taking opioid pain medicines, **do not** drive, drink alcohol, or start taking any new sleeping pills.
- Store opioid medicines in a secure place. Keep out of sight and out of reach of children, teens, and pets.
- Never share your opioid medicine with anyone else.
- Take any unused opioid medicines back to your pharmacy to be safely disposed.  
**Do not** keep unused medicines at home.

Always read the label and/or information from the pharmacist about how to take medication safely.

**Questions about medications?** Speak to your local pharmacist. After-hours, call 8-1-1 and ask to speak to a pharmacist.

## When to get help

If you notice any **bleeding** from, or **sudden swelling** around, the access site:

- Lie down flat.
- Press firmly over the area for 15 minutes.
- If the bleeding does not stop or swelling gets worse, **call 9-1-1**.

**Call 9-1-1** if you have any:

- trouble breathing or shortness of breath
- chest pain
- sudden severe pain.

**Call your surgeon or family practitioner** if you have any of the following:

- new numbness, pain, coldness or colour change (bluish or pale) in your leg
- pain that does not ease with pain medicine
- chills or a fever over 38°C (101. °F).
- warm, red, swollen access site, or blood or pus (yellow/green fluid) draining from the site
- redness, tenderness, or pain in your calf or lower leg
- throwing up or not able to keep fluids down
- dry mouth, only passing a little dark urine, and feeling thirsty
- feeling increasingly tired or dizzy

Can't contact your surgeon or family practitioner?  
Have any questions about your recovery?

- **Call Fraser Health Virtual Care**

10:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m., daily

**1-800-314-0999**

[fraserhealth.ca/virtualcare](https://www.fraserhealth.ca/virtualcare)

- **Call 8-1-1** (HealthLinkBC) to speak to a registered nurse any time - day or night.

HealthLinkBC is available in 130 languages.

For an interpreter, say your language in English. Wait until an interpreter comes on the phone.

**Questions you might have:**

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