

# Cerebral Aneurysm Repair: Endovascular Approach

## Your Procedure and Recovery at Home

Royal Columbian Hospital

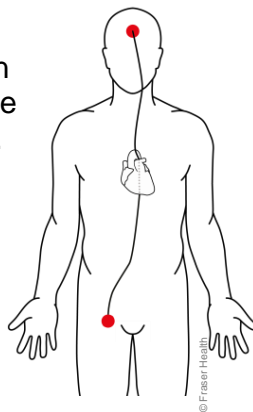
### What is a cerebral aneurysm?

Cerebral means brain. An aneurysm (say *ann-yer-iz-uhm*) is a bulge, or balloon-like swelling, in the wall of an artery in the brain. With the pressure from the blood pumping, the weak part balloons out. If left, it could expand to the point of bursting.

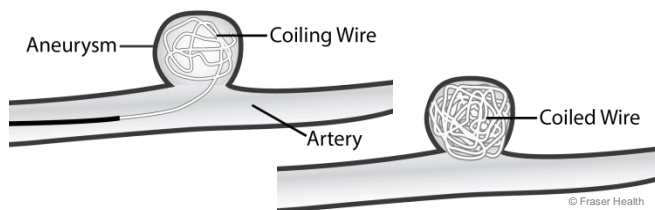
### What is the 'endovascular' approach?

This is a way of stopping the flow of blood into the aneurysm without opening up the brain.

The surgeon makes a small cut or puncture (access site) in the skin in your groin. A long, thin, flexible tube is inserted into your femoral artery. The surgeon uses a special x-ray camera to guide the tube up through your heart to where the aneurysm is in your brain. X-ray dye is injected through the catheter to make the aneurysm easier to see.



The surgeon might fill the aneurysm with a small coil of platinum or titanium wire. The wire causes blood to clot, sealing the aneurysm off from the artery. A fabric tube reinforced with wire (called a stent) or glue might be used to block blood from flowing into the aneurysm.



The procedure usually takes from 1 to 3 hours.

You usually go home 1 to 2 days after the procedure. This will depend on your recovery and your health before the procedure.

### Appointments after 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, if needed.
- You know what medicine(s) to take, as well as when and how to take them. You might be started on a new medication as a result of the procedure.

## Caring for Yourself at Home

### Drinking and Eating

Once you feel up to it, you can return to your normal diet. If you are taking opioid medications, try not to get constipated or strain to have a bowel movement.

You might get a mild headache after the procedure. Drink at least 6 to 8 glasses of liquids, especially water, over the next few days (unless you have been told differently because of a medical condition). This helps flush the x-ray dye out of your body.

If you feel sick or throw up, drink 'flat' ginger ale, clear soups, and clear fluids, and eat mild foods until you feel better. Other good choices include dry toast, crackers, popsicles, and gelatin dessert (such as Jell-O). Stay away from caffeine, carbonated soft drinks, and acidic fruit juices while feeling sick.

### Your access site

**Always** wash your hands before and after touching around your incision.

You can shower 24 hours after the procedure. Allow the shower to spray directly on the access site. Put a clean bandage on after your shower. Gently pat the area dry.

### Until the access site is healed:

- × No soaking in a bath tub or hot tub
- × No swimming
- × No creams, lotions, or ointments on the access site (unless directed by your surgeon)

The access site is usually sealed closed with a special device and uses a 'plug' made of collagen. It takes about 60 to 90 days for your body to absorb the collagen. For the next 90 days, you must carry a special card and show it any doctors so they know you have this collagen plug.

### Managing pain

You might notice some bruising or soreness in your groin around the access site. This is normal and should go away within a week.

Your surgeon gives you instructions to take pain medicine. This is usually for non-prescription (over the counter) pain medication such as acetaminophen (Tylenol<sup>®</sup>) or non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs★ (NSAIDs) such as ibuprofen (Advil<sup>®</sup>, Motrin<sup>®</sup>) or naproxen (Naprosyn, Aleve<sup>®</sup>).

★ **NSAIDs are not for everyone after this procedure.** 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.

If your pain is at an uncomfortable level, take your pain medicine as directed. As your pain improves, take your pain medicine less often and/or a smaller amount until you have little or no pain, then stop.

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

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

### Activity and Rest

Balance your activity and rest for the first few days. Try to get 8 hours of sleep each day. Take rest breaks during the day, as needed.

Check with your surgeon about when you can drive, return to work, or return to exercise or sports.

### When to get help

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**If you notice bleeding** or a sudden swelling at the access site:

- Lie down flat.
- Put gentle pressure on the access site.
- If bleeding does not stop, call 9-1-1.

**Call 9-1-1** if you have any of the following:

- trouble breathing or shortness of breath
- chest pain
- sudden severe headache, severe nausea, throwing up, and/or a very stiff neck (signs of a burst aneurysm)
- face drooping, arm or leg weakness, or problems talking (signs of a stroke)
- a seizure and this is new for you

### Call your surgeon or family practitioner

if you have any of the following:

- pain not easing with pain medicine
- a fever over 38°C (101°F)
- warm, red, swollen access site, or blood or pus (yellow/green fluid) draining from the area
- changes in the leg used for the procedure such as weakness, a new numbness or tingling feeling, feeling colder than the other leg, or turning to shades of blue
- tenderness, swelling, or redness of a calf or lower leg
- increasingly tired or dizzy
- feeling faint or lightheaded

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

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

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Family Practitioner: Refers to family doctor or nurse practitioner