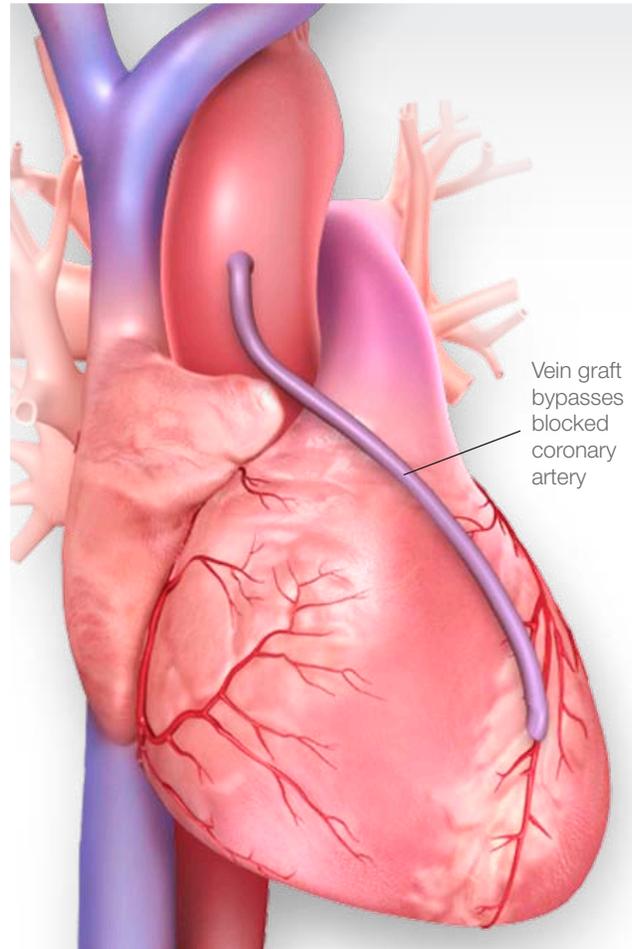




What Is Coronary Bypass Surgery?

Coronary artery bypass surgery (CABG) is a heart operation. It uses blood vessels taken from another part of your body to go around or “bypass” blocked or narrowed coronary (heart) arteries. The surgery helps people whose coronary arteries have become narrowed or blocked by fatty material called plaque. The bypass allows more blood and oxygen to flow to the heart muscle.

How do the arteries of your heart become blocked? Over time, fats, cholesterol and other substances can build up in the walls of your arteries to form a plaque. When the plaque breaks open and a blood clot forms, blood flow to your heart is blocked and can lead to chest discomfort called angina and to a heart attack.



How is it done?

- Your doctor will take a blood vessel from your chest or from your leg.
- One end is attached to your aorta (the large artery that comes out of the heart), and the other end is attached to the coronary artery below the point where it’s blocked.
- Blood can now flow through the new channel to the heart.
- You may have more than one coronary artery bypass done at a time, depending on how many arteries are blocked.

What is surgery like?

- You will be asleep during the operation. It can take 3 to 6 hours.

- After surgery, you go to an intensive care unit (ICU) for a few days.
- Your family can visit you briefly in ICU.

What about after surgery?

- You’ll wake up in ICU and may feel confused at first.
- It’s busy in ICU and the lights are always on. It’s normal to lose track of time.
- You’ll have a tube in your mouth and throat to help you breathe. It’s uncomfortable and you can’t talk with it, but nurses will help you communicate.
- The breathing tube will stay in until you can breathe on your own — a few hours.

(continued)



- You'll be hooked up to machines that monitor your heart rate and blood pressure for 12 to 24 hours.
- You'll have an IV in your arm to deliver medicines that help control circulation and blood pressure.

What happens when I leave ICU?

- You'll move to a hospital room.
- You'll be sore.
- You may have night sweats.
- You may be given medicine.
- You must breathe deeply and cough hard to clear the fluids in your lungs.
- You'll start to move and walk around right away.
- You can eat normally and should feel better each day.



After your surgery, you'll spend a few days in the ICU, where your nurses and doctors will monitor your heart rate and blood pressure.

HOW CAN I LEARN MORE?

- 1** Talk to your doctor, nurse or other healthcare professionals. If you have heart disease or have had a stroke, members of your family also may be at higher risk. It's very important for them to make changes now to lower their risk.
- 2** Call **1-800-AHA-USA1** (1-800-242-8721), or visit **heart.org** to learn more about heart disease.
- 3** For information on stroke, call **1-888-4-STROKE** (1-888-478-7653) or visit us at **StrokeAssociation.org**.

Do you have questions for the doctor or nurse?

Take a few minutes to write your questions for the next time you see your healthcare provider.

For example:

When will my chest heal?

When can I go back to work?

My Questions:

We have many other fact sheets to help you make healthier choices to reduce your risk, manage disease or care for a loved one. Visit **heart.org/answersbyheart** to learn more.

Knowledge is power, so Learn and Live!

