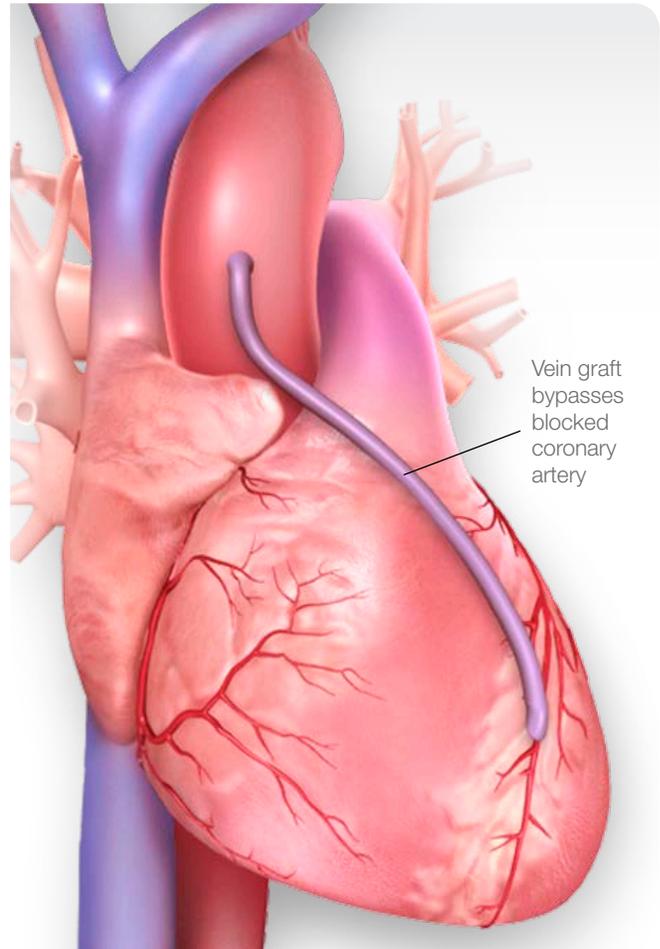




# What Is Coronary Bypass Surgery?

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. This 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, leg or arm.
- 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. The length of time depends on what has to be done.

- 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.
- 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 is usually taken out within 24 hours after the operation.
- 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.

(continued)



### What happens when I leave ICU?

- You'll move to a hospital room for about a week, depending on the type of surgery you had.
- You'll be sore.
- You may have night sweats.
- 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.
- You may be given medicine.

### What medicines may I be prescribed?

You may be prescribed dual antiplatelet therapy (DAPT). This means that you may be treated with two types of antiplatelet agents to prevent future risks of blood clots and bleeding.

- **Aspirin.** Almost everyone that has CABG surgery will be treated with aspirin for the rest of their lives.
- **P2Y<sub>12</sub> Inhibitor.** You may be prescribed one of three P2Y<sub>12</sub> inhibitors -- clopidogrel, prasugrel, or



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.

ticagrelor. You'll likely be on this medication for a year after the surgery. After this, it may be stopped, but you will continue on aspirin therapy.

In addition to DAPT, you may be prescribed additional medications as well.

### HOW CAN I LEARN MORE?

- 1 Call **1-800-AHA-USA1** (1-800-242-8721), or visit **heart.org** to learn more about heart disease and stroke.
- 2 Sign up to get *Heart Insight*, a free magazine for heart patients and their families, at **heartinsight.org**.
- 3 Connect with others sharing similar journeys with heart disease and stroke by joining our Support Network at **heart.org/supportnetwork**.

### 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.