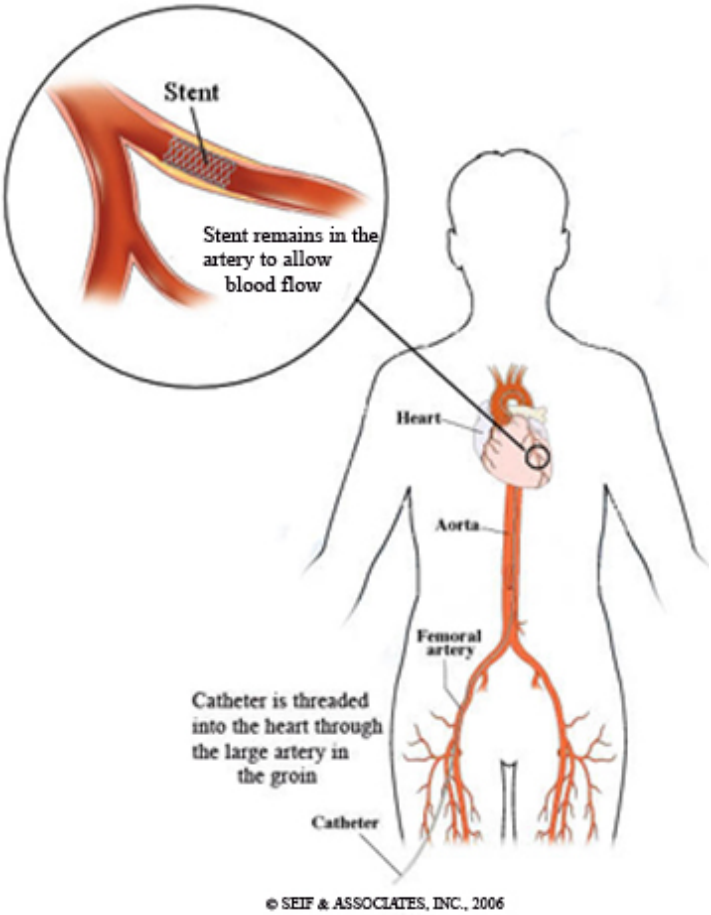
Coronary Artery Disease Treatment, Without Surgery, Using a Stent

This is a procedure to widen or open a narrow blood vessel of the heart (*coronary artery*). When a coronary artery becomes partially blocked it decreases blood flow to that area. This may lead to chest pain or a heart attack (*myocardial infarction*). Arteries may become blocked by cholesterol buildup (*plaque*) in the lining or wall.

A stent is a small piece of metal that looks like a mesh or a spring. Stent placement may be done right after an angiogram that found a blocked artery or as a treatment for a heart attack.



COMPLICATIONS:

- Damage to the heart.
- A blockage may return.
- Bleeding at the site.
- Blood clot to another part of the body.

PROCEDURE:

1. You may be given a medication to help you relax before and during the procedure through an IV in your hand or arm.
2. A local anesthetic to make the area numb may be used before inserting the *catheter* (a long, hollow tube about the size of a piece of cooked spaghetti).
3. You will be prepared for the procedure by washing and shaving the area where the catheter will be inserted. This is usually done in the groin.
4. A specially trained doctor will insert the catheter with a guide wire into an artery. This is guided under a special type of X-ray (*fluoroscopy*) to the opening of the blocked artery.
5. Special dye is then injected and X-rays are taken.
6. A tiny wire is guided to the blocked spot and a balloon is inflated to make the artery wider. The stent is expanded and crushes the plaque into the wall of the vessel. The stent holds the area open like a scaffolding and improves the blood flow.
7. Sometimes the artery may be made wider using a laser or other tools to remove plaque.
8. When the blood flow is better, the catheter is removed. The lining of the artery will grow over the stent which stays where it was placed.

AFTER THE PROCEDURE:

- You will stay in bed for several hours.
- The access site will be watched and you will be checked frequently.
- Blood tests, X-rays and an EKG may be done.
- You may stay in the hospital overnight for observation.

SEEK IMMEDIATE MEDICAL CARE IF:

- You develop chest pain, shortness of breath, feel faint, or pass out.
- There is bleeding, swelling, or drainage from the catheter insertion site.

- You develop pain, discoloration, coldness, or severe bruising in the leg or arm that held the catheter.
- You see blood in your urine or stool. This may be bright red blood in urine or stools, or also appear as black, tarry stools.
- An oral temperature above 102° F (38.9° C) develops.

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