Femoral Popliteal Bypass Surgery
Pre-op and Procedure

A femoral popliteal bypass surgery is a surgery to go around (*bypass*) a blocked artery in the leg by using a blood vessel or a graft. Arteries are very important. They carry oxygen and nutrients to the body. The femoral artery is in the upper part of the leg (*thigh*). It is the main artery that carries blood to the leg. Popliteal arteries are in the back of the knee. These arteries take blood to the lower part of the leg.

CAUSES

Fatty material can build up in an artery and block blood flow. This is called hardening of the arteries (*atherosclerosis*). When this condition happens in the leg arteries, not enough blood flows to the muscles. This causes leg pain when walking. People who have poor blood flow in one or both legs are said to have peripheral vascular disease (PVD). A femoral popliteal bypass surgery is done to correct narrowed or blocked arteries in the leg.

LET YOUR CAREGIVER KNOW ABOUT THE FOLLOWING:

- Any allergies to medications, food or latex.
- All medications you are taking, including:
  - All prescription medicines.
  - Over the counter medicines.
  - Topical skin creams.
  - Eye-drops, vitamins or herbs.
- Previous problems with anesthesia or numbing medicine.
- Problems with your heart, lungs or kidneys.
- Any history of blood clots or bleeding problems.
- Previous surgery.
- Other health problems.
- Possibility of pregnancy, if possible.

BEFORE THE SURGERY

- A medical history and physical exam will be done. Other tests may include:
  - Blood tests.
  - A test to check the heart's rhythm (*electrocardiogram*).
  - A test to look inside your arteries, to see how the blood is flowing (*angiogram*). To do this, a dye is injected into your blood. Then X-rays are taken.
- You will need to sign a consent form for the surgery. This requires signing a legal paper that explains:
  - The procedure.
  - Benefits of the surgery.
  - The risks of the surgery.
- You may need to be admitted to the hospital the day before your surgery.
- You will have nothing by mouth (NPO) starting at 12 midnight the day of your surgery.

THE SURGERY

The surgeon will bypass the blocked section of your artery. By bypassing the blocked area of the artery, blood flow is restored to the lower part of your leg. A bypass is done in one of two ways using either:

- A blood vessel called the Saphenous vein.
- A man made (*synthetic*) graft.

AFTER SURGERY

- You will stay in a recovery area until the anesthesia has worn off. Your blood pressure and pulse will be checked. After the recovery room, you may be taken to the intensive care unit (ICU).
- You will be given pain medicine to keep you comfortable.
- You may have ice packs over the surgical area. This can help reduce swelling and pain.
- Your surgical site will be checked often after your surgery. This is to make sure you have good blood flow in your leg.
  - Caregivers will feel for a heartbeat (*pulse*) on your foot. Your leg will also be checked for changes in color, temperature or for decreased sensation.
- To prevent blood clots in your legs, you will begin activity a few hours after your surgery.
- You may stay in the ICU for less than a day. From there, you will go to a regular hospital room.
- When it is time for you to go home, you will be given discharge instructions. You will be shown how to care for your incisions. Ask when your incision site can get wet.

RISKS AND COMPLICATIONS

Problems after surgery (*complications*) can occur. Possibilities include:

- Bleeding.
- Loss of pulses in your surgical leg due to a blood clot.
- Blood clot in the graft site.
- Failure of the graft.
- Infection.

PROGNOSIS

A femoral popliteal bypass usually reduces pain and makes walking easier. People who make lifestyle changes and are treated for atherosclerosis have the best results. For long-term success:

- Control your blood pressure.
- Take all prescription medication as instructed.
- Manage diabetes if you have it.
- Do not smoke.
- Eat healthy foods. Ask your caregiver for suggestions, or talk with a dietician.
- Get regular exercise. Talk with your caregiver before starting any new physical activity.

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