



Information for You from Your Health Care Team

**Postoperative Instructions
After Leg Bypass Surgery**

Activity:

- Avoid strenuous activity.
- Walk short distances several times a day. Slowly increase the distance you walk daily.
- When not walking, lay down with your legs elevated above the level of your heart. Make sure to use a pillow under your lower legs to keep your knees slightly bent and pressure off your heels.
- Limit the amount of time you sit with your feet down on the floor. If possible, sit with your feet and legs elevated. Avoid sitting for more than 1 hour at a time.
- Leg swelling after surgery is common, especially if you have been walking or sitting. To help decrease the swelling, you should lay down and elevate your legs above the level of your heart. If you have a lot of swelling in your feet and legs, you are doing too much walking and sitting. You need to decrease your activity level and elevate your legs for longer periods during the day.
- You may climb stairs. Use the good leg first when going upstairs and the operated leg first when going down. Go up a few steps with rest periods in between as needed.
- Do not drive until your doctor feels you are able to safely. You may take short car trips as a passenger. If possible, sit in the back seat with the operated leg elevated on the seat.

Incision Care:

- You may shower when you return home. Gently wash over the incision with soap, rinse well with water, and pat dry. Do not scrub the incision. Do not soak the incision in water. No tub baths, swimming, or hottubs until your doctor feels that your incision is completely healed.
- Do not put any creams, lotions, ointments or powders directly on the incision. A moisturizing cream may be used daily on the surrounding skin.
- The leg incision may extend up to your groin. You may place a gauze pad to cover the incision in this area to keep it clean and dry.
- Avoid tight clothing that may rub against the incision.

Medications:

- You will be given a prescription for pain medicine.
- Resume your preoperative medications unless specifically instructed not to.
- You will be sent home with medication to thin your blood. This is to help keep your bypass from closing up.

Dental Work:

- If a Prosthetic (artificial) Graft was used to repair your artery you may need antibiotics before and after dental work or surgery. Please talk to your dentist and doctor about this.

Risk Factor Reduction:

- To prevent future closing of the bypass graft, it is important to avoid certain risk factors. The risk factors that you can control include stop smoking, weight management, proper treatment of high cholesterol, diabetes and high blood pressure. We will work with you and your primary care physician to help achieve good control of these risk factors.

When to Call Your Surgeon:

- If you notice any possible signs of infection. These include increased redness, tenderness, warmth, swelling or drainage from the incision or generalized fever or chills.
- If your leg becomes more painful, cold, numb, has a change in color or you can no longer feel your pulses, call the office immediately at (315) 464-1800 or go to emergency room.

Speak Up If You Have Any Questions or Concerns