



Information for You from Your Health Care Team

What is an endovascular abdominal aortic aneurysm (AAA) repair?

The word endovascular means “inside a blood vessel.” In an endovascular AAA repair doctors place a strong, tube that can bend inside the aorta. The doctor makes two small incisions near each hip to get to the femoral arteries. The doctors then slide the endograft through these blood vessels and into the aorta. When the endograft is in the right position it opens up and seals off the aneurysm. Blood can flow through the endograft instead of the aneurysm. The aneurysm is no longer at risk for breaking open and bleeding.

How is endovascular AAA repair done?

Before an endovascular AAA repair is scheduled, the doctor uses special x-rays to measure the size of the blood vessels above and below the aneurysm. The doctor chooses an endograft that will fit the size of the blood vessels. The endograft comes in a plastic tube. To place the endograft, the doctor makes two small cuts near each hip to get to the femoral arteries. Through these small cuts, the plastic tubes with the endograft are placed into the patient’s blood stream. X-rays during the procedure help the doctor guide the endograft into the aorta. The doctor uses an x-ray to make sure that blood goes through the endograft and does not leak into the aneurysm. The doctor then removes the plastic tubes that the endograft came in and closes the small incisions.

What is the recovery after endovascular AAA repair?

Endovascular AAA repair may cause less discomfort after surgery because the incision that are used are small. Many patients have a short hospital stay. They can usually return to normal activity within 4 to 6 weeks after surgery.

Why is follow-up after endovascular AAA repair so important?

It is possible for problems with the endograft to occur without causing any symptoms. The doctor can check for these problems by getting pictures of the endograft. Follow-up includes a check up at 1 month, 6 months, 12 months and every year thereafter. At each check up patients get a physical exam, routine blood tests, x-rays, a CT scan, and an ultrasound test.

Can all patients with AAA have an endovascular repair?

All patients can not be treated with this procedure. If the blood vessel is too large or has too many twists and turns, the endograft will not fit or seal off the aneurysm. Doctors are able to decide which patients can and cannot have an endovascular repair by looking at the patient’s x-rays ,CT scans and angiograms.