

Coronary Artery Bypass Graft (CABG)



Coronary Artery Bypass Grafting (CABG) is a procedure used to treat coronary artery disease (CAD). Coronary artery disease is the narrowing of the coronary arteries, which are the blood vessels that supply oxygen to the heart muscle.

What Can I Expect After Surgery?

You will stay in the hospital about 4-6 days after surgery, with the first one or two days in the ICU. If possible, arrange for someone to help you out at home for the first couple of days after you are discharged from the hospital. Plan to take off work for at least 4 weeks (this varies, depending on your job).

How will I feel after surgery?

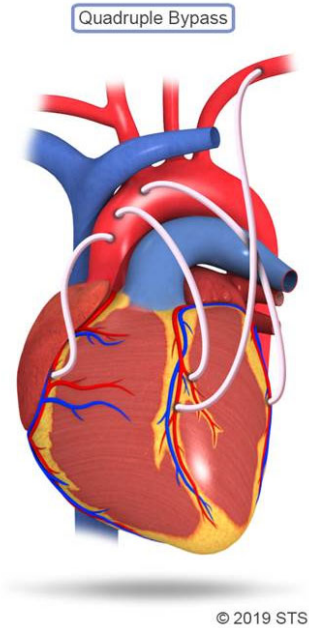
- Your chest will feel sore for a few weeks after surgery
- You may feel that you get winded or tired more easily after surgery
- Many patients may feel anxious, depressed, or have trouble sleeping for several weeks after surgery. This should get better as you continue to heal. Try purchasing a pillow that will help you sleep sitting up at night in order to get more restful sleep.
- It is normal to experience swelling in your legs – elevate your legs to help prevent and relieve swelling
- It is normal to experience some cramping, aching, numbness, or tingling in your chest
- It is NOT normal to have severe trouble breathing, persistent shortness of breath, pain that is not relieved by medication, or have difficulty inhaling a full breath. **Call you doctor if you are experiencing any of these symptoms.**

Activity:

- After surgery involving a sternotomy (cutting through the sternum to gain access to your heart), you will be on **“Sternal Precautions”** for **3 months**. This means:
 - DO NOT lift anything over 10 lbs.
 - DO NOT drive until you are no longer taking pain medication and you have met with your doctor
 - Use the pillow that was given to you in the hospital to “splint” or brace your chest when coughing or sneezing
- Avoid strenuous activities such as jogging, aerobics, weight lifting, etc.
- Use the incentive spirometer that was sent home with you from the hospital
- Weigh yourself every morning, at the same time, before eating, and using the same scale. Notify your doctor if you gain 3 pounds or more in 2 days
- Try to walk every day, start with short distances and increase each day. You could try starting at 15 minutes a day, 5 minutes 3x per day and increase slowly
- Take it slow – do not overdo it, rest when you are tired

Medications:

- Take all medications as prescribed in your discharge paperwork
- If you are taking pain medications (VICODIN, NORCO, LORTAB, DILAUDID, PERCOCET), our office cannot refill this medication by phone. You must **MAKE AN APPOINTMENT TO BE SEEN IN THE OFFICE TO GET A NEW PRESCRIPTION**
- For refills on all other medication, call your pharmacy directly to request a refill at least 48 hours in advance



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- Pain medications may cause constipation. You may take an over the counter stool softener or laxative and try to include fruits, vegetables and fiber in your diet
- Take pain medication with food or take Pepcid if you experience stomach upset

Incision Care:

- Shower as usual with soap and water ONLY
- DO NOT soak in water (baths, pool, hot tub, lake, etc.) for 6 weeks
- DO NOT apply hydrogen peroxide, rubbing alcohol or ointments to your incision
- Slight redness or swelling over the incision is normal
- If you have surgical glue or tape over the incision, do not remove it; these will come off on their own
- Female patients should wear a soft supportive sports bra without underwire for at least 2 weeks
- Keep the incision clean and dry

Please call our office or seek immediate medical care if:

- You lose consciousness
- You have severe trouble breathing, shortness of breath while at rest, or trouble breathing when trying to lie flat
- You have severe chest pain or pain that is not relieved with pain medication
- Your incision comes open
- Bright red blood soaking through the bandage over your incision
- Signs of infection including severe redness or warmth at the incision site, pus draining from the incision, fever greater than 101 degrees

If you were not given a post-op appointment, please call our office to schedule a post-op visit with your doctor.

