



Patient & Family Guide  
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# Coronary Intervention (Balloon or Stent Procedure)



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# **Coronary Intervention (Balloon or Stent Procedure)**

This pamphlet will help you learn about having a coronary intervention and what to expect after going home.

The procedure may be done on inpatients (patients already admitted to the hospital) and outpatients (patients who come to the hospital for this procedure).

## **What is a coronary intervention?**

This is a treatment used to open blocked arteries in your heart.

## **How is a coronary intervention done?**

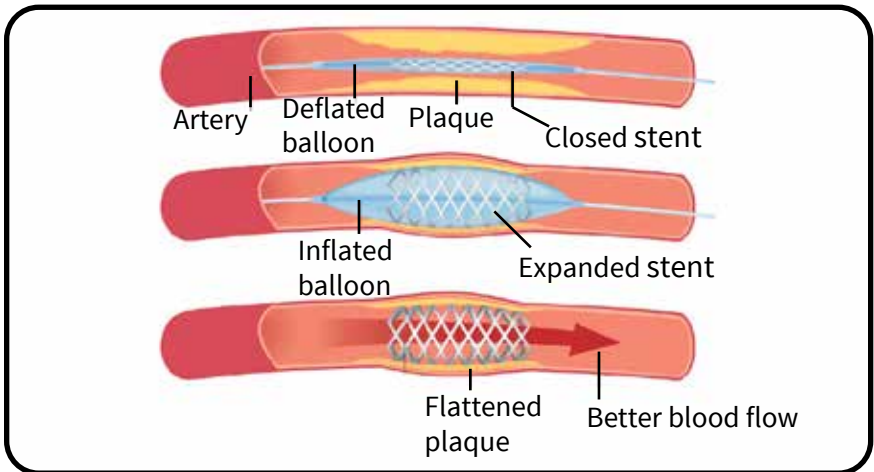
- You will be awake during the procedure. You may be given mild sedation (medication to help you relax) before the procedure.
- A small catheter (hollow tube) will be passed through an artery in your groin or wrist. The doctor doing the procedure will freeze your groin or wrist area so you should not feel any pain.
- The catheter will be passed up to your heart, where a special dye will be injected into your arteries. This will let the doctor see where your arteries are blocked.

- The catheter has a small balloon on the tip. Once the catheter is placed at the blocked site, the balloon will be inflated (filled with air) and deflated (the air is let out) several times. This will stretch your artery and flatten the plaque (fatty deposits) against the artery wall. This lets the blood flow through your artery to your heart.
  - After the balloon procedure, your doctor may place a stent (hollow mesh tube) in the area they just opened.
  - To learn more about your visit to the Cardiac Cath Lab, **watch the video by:**
    - › Visiting <https://library.nshealth.ca/Cardiac-Services>
- OR**
- › Scanning the QR code below on your smartphone (open the camera on your smartphone, point the camera at the code, and tap the banner or border that appears):



## What is a stent?

- A stent is a mesh-like tube made of stainless steel. It is used to hold your artery open and stop it from narrowing again after the procedure.
- The stent may be coated in a special medication (drug eluting stent) to help keep your artery open. Your doctor will tell you if this is an option for you.
- A stent cannot be used if your artery is too small or twisted. If the doctor thinks a stent is right for you, you will be started on a special medication.



## **Are there any risks with this procedure?**

There are some risks with this procedure. Your doctor will talk about the risks with you. If you have any questions, please ask.

## **How do I get ready for this procedure?**

- Please do not wear any jewelry or bring any valuables with you to the hospital. The hospital is not responsible for the loss of any item.

### **Before the procedure:**

- A nurse will measure your height and weight. These measurements help your doctor decide how much dye to use.
- An electrocardiogram (ECG) will be done.
- A sample of blood may be taken to measure how thin your blood is, or if you have not had blood work done within the last 6 months.
- A nurse will answer any questions you have.
- A doctor will examine you and explain the procedure to you.
- You will be given an “Information Letter” to read. The doctor will explain the risks of the procedure and then sign the consent with you.

## **Can I take my usual medications before the procedure?**

- **If you are an inpatient**, you may take your usual medication(s) on the evening before the test and during the night.
  - › Sometimes, certain medications should not be taken on the morning of the test. The team caring for you in the hospital will tell you which medication(s) you can take and if any will not be given before the test.
- **If you are an outpatient**, bring your medication(s) with you to the hospital. Ask the nurse if it is OK to take it before the test.

## **Can I eat and drink before the procedure?**

- **Do not eat or drink after midnight the night before your procedure.**
- In the morning, you may take your usual medication(s) with a small sip of water.

## **I am an outpatient. What will happen on the day of the procedure?**

- A nurse will use surgical clippers to clip an area of hair on each groin, and on your right wrist.
- When it is time for your procedure, you will be asked to pee and put on a hospital gown. **You must remove your underwear and any jewelry.** You may wear glasses, dentures, and hearing aids, if needed.
- One (1) or 2 intravenous (IV) tubes will be inserted (put in) in your arm. They will be used to give you fluids and medications before, during, and after your procedure.
- You will be taken to the Cardiac Cath Lab on a stretcher.

## **For outpatients and inpatients:**

### **What can I expect if the test is done through my groin?**

- The sheath (tube used to pass the catheter to your heart) may stay in your artery for up to 4 hours.

- You will need to stay in bed for a period of time after the sheath is removed. This will prevent bleeding and give the puncture site (cut where the catheter was put into your body) time to heal.
- **You may be on complete bedrest for up to 10 hours after the procedure.** This will be in your inpatient bed or in the area you were in before the procedure.

## **What does complete bedrest mean?**

- You must lie flat on your back.
- **Do not** lift your head from the pillow. You may turn your head from side to side.
- **Do not** put your elbows above your shoulders or your arms behind your head.
- **Do not** cross or bend your legs.
- You may wiggle your toes and flex your feet.
- The head of the bed can be raised up to 30 degrees. Your nurse can help you with this.
- Avoid stretching, such as reaching for things on your bedside table.



## How can I prevent bleeding from the puncture site?

- You may have bleeding from the puncture site or blood may stay under your skin in a firm lump. The lump may be the size of a walnut, a golf ball, or bigger.
- You can help prevent bleeding by applying gentle pressure over the bandage whenever you laugh, cough, sneeze, pee, or poop for the first 48 hours (2 days) after your procedure. **Do not try to apply pressure while the sheath is still in place.**

## What should I do if there is bleeding from the puncture site while I am in the hospital?

- A warm, wet, trickling feeling in your groin area is often a sign of bleeding. Check your bandage for bleeding every 30 minutes for the first few hours after your procedure.
- Do this by applying light pressure over the bandage with the fingertips of your closest hand. Then bring your hand close to your face (**do not lift your head**) and check for blood on your fingertips. **If you see blood, do not panic.**

- If you notice bleeding or a lump that is getting bigger while you are in the hospital, apply firm pressure with your hand to the puncture site. Tell a nurse right away by ringing your call bell. If you are not in bed, return to bed right away if you can. If you need help to get back to bed, wait for help.

**If you have bleeding while at home, see pages 17 and 18.**

## **What can I do if I have back pain from lying flat?**

If your back starts to hurt or bother you, tell your nurse. They may be able to help by changing your position. You may also be given pain pills.

## **How will I pee while lying flat on bedrest?**

You will use a urinal (bottle) or a bedpan. If you have trouble with this, please tell your nurse.

## **For the next 48 hours (2 days):**

- Avoid bending, squatting, and heavy lifting (over 10 pounds).
- **Do not** play any sports or go jogging.
- Climb stairs slowly and **do not** walk fast.

## What can I expect if the test is done through my wrist?

- You will not need bedrest. You will be able to get up with help when your sedation has worn off.
- You will have a clear pressure band over the puncture site. The nurse will loosen the pressure band regularly until it can be removed.
- After the pressure band is removed, a clear dressing will be put on. This can be taken off in 24 hours (1 day) and replaced with a bandage, if needed.
- If you see bleeding while the pressure band is on, call your nurse.
- If you see bleeding after the pressure band is off, apply direct pressure and call your nurse.
- **Do not** put any pressure on the wrist used for the procedure. For example, **do not** push yourself up out of a chair.
- You may feel mild tingling and/or tenderness in your hand and fingers. If you feel this while in the hospital, tell your nurse. You may experience this for up to 3 days after your procedure. If it does not go away after 3 days, call your primary health care provider (family doctor or nurse practitioner).

## **If you have a puncture site in your wrist:**

### **For 1 day after your procedure:**

- **Do not** put direct pressure on the wrist used for your coronary intervention. **Do not** push yourself up out of a chair or bed with this arm.

### **For 2 days after your procedure:**

- **Do not** operate a tractor, lawnmower, motorcycle, or ATV.
- **Do not** lift anything heavier than 1 pound with the wrist used for your procedure.
- **Do not** do any activities where you use or bend your wrist a lot (like golf, painting, or housework).

### **For 3 days after your procedure:**

- **Do not** lift anything heavier than 5 pounds with the wrist used for your procedure.

### **For 5 days after your procedure:**

- **Do not** do any intense (hard) exercise (like tennis) with the wrist used for your coronary intervention.

## Care after sedation

After sedation, you may be drowsy (tired) and may not remember parts of the procedure. This is normal. These effects should not last for more than 24 hours.

### For 24 hours after you receive sedation:

- **Do not** make any important decisions.
- **Do not** sign legal or financial documents, or make large purchases.
- **Do not** drink alcohol.
- **Do not** drive.

## General instructions

### When can I eat after the procedure?

- If the procedure was done through your wrist:
  - › You may eat after the procedure.
- If the procedure was done through your groin and the sheath has been removed:
  - › You may eat finger foods (like toast and sandwiches). These are easy to eat while lying flat. Try not to eat too much or too fast to prevent gas and/or stomach pain.

- If the procedure was done through your groin and the sheath is still in place:
  - › You may only have sips of liquids.
- Drink plenty of fluids. The dye used during the procedure can make you dehydrated (not have enough fluids).

### **When will my IV be removed?**

**Outpatient** – Your IV will be removed after you are eating and drinking well.

**Inpatient** – The doctor will decide when you no longer need the IV.

### **Can I have visitors after my procedure?**

You may have visitors before and after your procedure. They may be asked to leave the room during nursing care. Visitor restrictions may change at any time. Please ask your nurse.

### **Medications**

Some of your medications may be changed or stopped after your procedure. You may have a new medication added. Your health care team will talk about this with you after your procedure.

## When can I take off the dressing?

- You can take off the dressing 24 hours after your procedure.
- If you have a puncture site, you can take off the clear dressing the day after your procedure. You may replace it with a bandage.
  - › Keep the puncture site covered with a bandage until it has healed.

## When can I take a bath?

- **Do not take a bath, swim, or use a sauna or hot tub for 48 hours after your procedure.**
- You can shower the morning after your procedure. Try to keep the dressing dry while showering. **Do not** point the water directly at the puncture site.
- If you are in the hospital, you may not be able to shower the morning after your test. For example, if you are on a cardiac monitor, you will not be able to shower.

## **I am an outpatient. When can I go home?**

- A member of your health care team will tell you when you can expect to be discharged.
- You may be discharged on the evening of your procedure or early (6:30 a.m.) the next day.
- If you are discharged on the same day as your procedure, your nurse will tell you when you can expect to leave the hospital.
- **A responsible adult must come directly to the nursing unit to pick you up. They must stay with you until the morning after your procedure.**
- You are expected to stay within 50 km of Halifax until the morning after your procedure. This is for your safety, so you can get the care you need in case of any complications.
- If you need help finding accommodations, please tell a member of your health care team. We can give you contact information.

## **When can I drive?**

- Ask your cardiologist (heart doctor) when you may drive after your procedure. Usually, this is in 48 hours.
- If you were admitted to the hospital for another reason, when you can drive will depend on why you were admitted.



## **Follow-up visit with your cardiologist**

It is important to keep all appointments given to you by your cardiologist and primary health care provider.

### **Lifestyle**

To keep a healthy lifestyle:

- Eat low-fat, low-sugar foods.
- Stop smoking.
- Increase your activity level. Exercise can help keep your weight down, improve your cholesterol level, and help prevent your arteries from getting clogged.
- Start walking regularly 48 hours after your procedure. Check with your primary health care provider if this is OK for you.
- Limit alcohol to 2 drinks a day (1 drink = 1 oz of hard liquor, 4 oz of wine, or 12 oz of beer).
- Take your medication(s) as told by your cardiologist and primary health care provider.
- Try relaxation techniques (like deep breathing).

## **If bleeding from your groin starts after you go home:**

If you have bleeding or a lump under your skin after you are discharged, lie on your back and ask someone to help you stop the bleeding:

- Have them apply pressure with their hand **about half an inch above the puncture site.**
- For bleeding, keep applying pressure until the bleeding stops.
- For a lump under your skin, keep applying pressure until the lump gets smaller or softer.
- If the lump does not get smaller or softer after applying pressure for 5 minutes, call your primary health care provider.

**If you cannot reach your primary health care provider and the lump keeps getting bigger, call 911 right away.**

**Do not drive yourself.**

**If bleeding from your wrist starts after you go home:**

- Sit down and apply firm pressure to the puncture site with your fingers for **10 minutes**.
- If the bleeding stops, sit quietly with your wrist straight for **2 hours**. Call your primary health care provider.
- If the bleeding does not stop after applying pressure for 10 minutes, or if there is a large amount of bleeding or spurting, **call 911 or go to the nearest Emergency Department right away. Do not drive yourself.**

**Call 911 to take you to the nearest Emergency Department right away if you:**

- › are not able to stop the bleeding at the puncture site.
- › have intense (very strong) pain at the puncture site.
- › have severe chest pain or pressure.

**Do not drive yourself.**

**Call your primary health care provider if you:**

- › have severe (very bad) pain in your hand.
- › have a fever (temperature above 38° C/100.4° F) or chills.
- › see pus at the puncture site.
- › see a firm lump at the puncture site that does not get smaller or softer after applying pressure for 5 minutes.

**If you cannot reach your primary health care provider, go to the nearest Emergency Department right away.**

**Do not drive yourself.**





This pamphlet is for educational purposes only. It is not intended to replace the advice or professional judgment of a health care provider. The information may not apply to all situations. If you have any questions, please ask your health care provider.

Find this pamphlet and all our patient resources here:  
<https://library.nshealth.ca/Patients-Guides>

Connect with a registered nurse in Nova Scotia any time:  
Call 811 or visit: <https://811.novascotia.ca>

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The information in this pamphlet is to be updated every 3 years or as needed.