

# Angioplasty of the Legs (Balloon Procedure)

*Aussi disponible en français :  
Angioplastie des artères de jambe  
(intervention par ballonnet) (FF85-1791)*



# **Angioplasty of the Leg (Balloon Procedure)**

## **What is angioplasty of the leg?**

Angioplasty of the leg (also called a balloon procedure) is a procedure done to open narrowed arteries in your leg.

It may be done to slow or stop you from having bypass surgery (surgery to help blood get past a blockage).

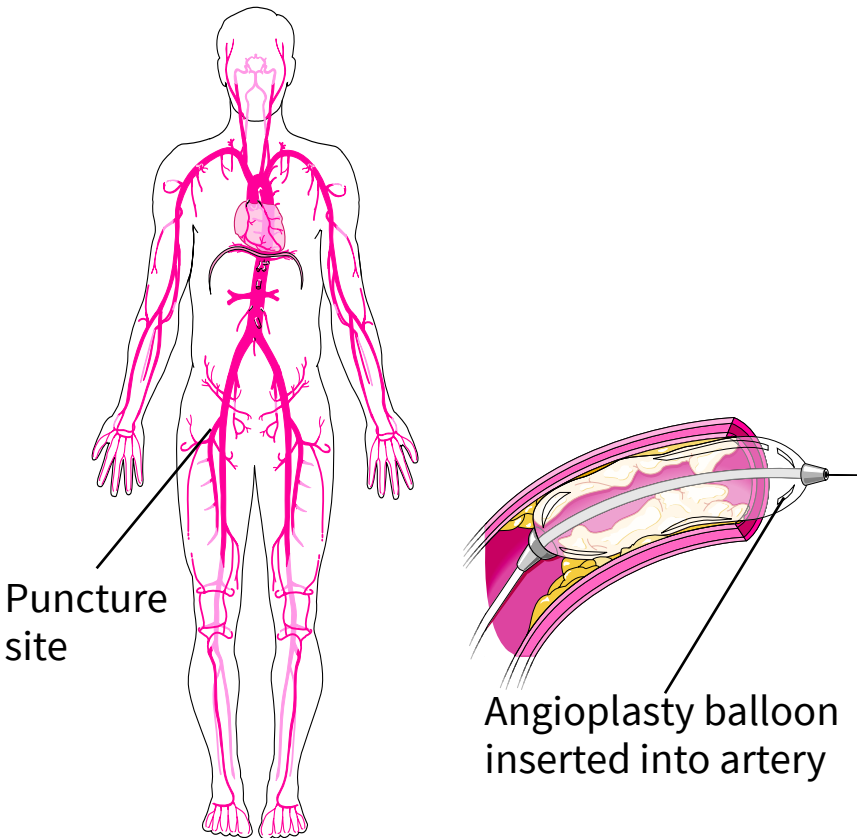
## **Why do I need this procedure?**

You may need angioplasty of the leg if:

- You have severe (very bad) pain in your legs when walking that affects your quality of life and/or your ability to work. This is called claudication.
- You have gangrene (tissue death) or wounds that do not heal.
- You have pain even when you are resting.
- You are at risk of losing your leg because of less blood flow.

## How is angioplasty of the leg done?

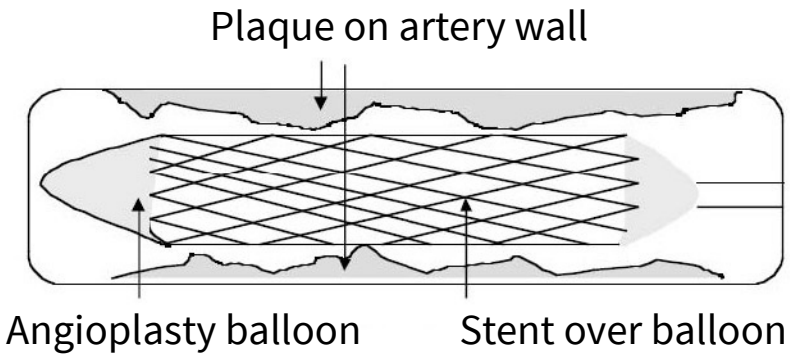
- A catheter (flexible tube) is passed through an artery in your leg. The tube has a small balloon on the tip.
- The tube is placed into the narrowed artery. Dye is injected into the tube and pictures are taken of the artery. Then the balloon is blown up several times. This makes a bigger opening inside the artery and improves blood flow to your leg.
- Your doctor may then put a stent in the artery.



## What is a stent?

A stent is a wire mesh tube. It holds the artery open and prevents it from getting narrowed again.

A stent is permanent (stays in place for the rest of your life). Your doctor will decide if a stent is right for you.



## Are there any risks with this procedure?

Your doctor will talk with you about the risks of this procedure. Risks may include:

- › Bleeding at the puncture site that could cause a bruise and/or a lump
- › Damage to the artery
- › A chance that you may need another angioplasty of the leg, bypass surgery, or an amputation (loss of limb) if the procedure does not open the blockage
- › A small risk of kidney problems because of the dye used to see the artery

## How long will I be in the hospital?

This procedure can be done as an inpatient or as an outpatient. Your doctor will decide what is best for you.

### Before your procedure

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

### After your procedure

After the procedure, you must stay in bed for up to 4 hours. This will help to avoid bleeding and give the puncture site time to heal.

### While you are on bedrest:

- Lie flat on your back.
- **Do not** lift your head off 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.
- **Do not** stretch (like reaching for things on your bedside table).
- The head of your bed may be raised 30 degrees.

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

If your back starts to hurt, please tell your nurse. They may be able to help you by changing your position and/or giving you pain medication.

## **How will I pee when I am on bedrest?**

You will need to use a urinal (bottle) or bedpan. If you are having problems with this, please talk with your nurse.

## **When will my intravenous (IV) tube be taken out?**

Your doctor will decide when you no longer need an IV.

## **Activity**

- It may take about 1 to 2 weeks to recover after this procedure.
- Plan to take it easy for the first 1 to 2 days, before going back to your usual activities.
- **Do not** drive if you are taking pain medication.
- **Do not** drive if you have pain in your groin.

## Discomfort

- You may have some swelling in your leg. This is caused by having more blood flowing to your leg.

### If you have swelling:

- › Raise your leg above the level of your heart for 20 to 30 minutes several times during the day. The swelling will go away over time.
- You may feel pain at the puncture site. This will go away over time. **If the pain gets worse, call your surgeon's office. If you cannot reach your surgeon, go to the nearest Emergency Department right away.**
- You may have a bruise and/or a lump at the puncture site. This will go away over time.

**If the lump gets bigger when you are home  
OR**

**if there is bleeding from the puncture site:**

- **Press gently on the site with your hand and go to the nearest Emergency Department right away.**
- **Do not drive yourself.**

# Notes:

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Contact your local public library for books, videos, magazines, and other resources.

For more information, go to <http://library.novascotia.ca>

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

Learn about other programs and services in your community: call 211 or visit <http://ns.211.ca>

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