



Patient & Family Guide
2016

Angioplasty of the Legs (Balloon Procedure)

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



www.nshealth.ca

Angioplasty of the Legs (Balloon Procedure)

What is angioplasty of the legs?

This is a procedure done to open blocked arteries in the leg. It may be done to delay or stop you from having bypass surgery (surgery to help blood get around a blockage).

When is angioplasty done?

You may need angioplasty if:

- You feel severe (really bad) pain in your legs when walking (called claudication) that affects your quality of life and/or your ability to work.
- You have gangrene (tissue death) or wounds that don't heal.
- You have pain even when you are resting.
- You are in danger of losing your leg because of less blood flow.

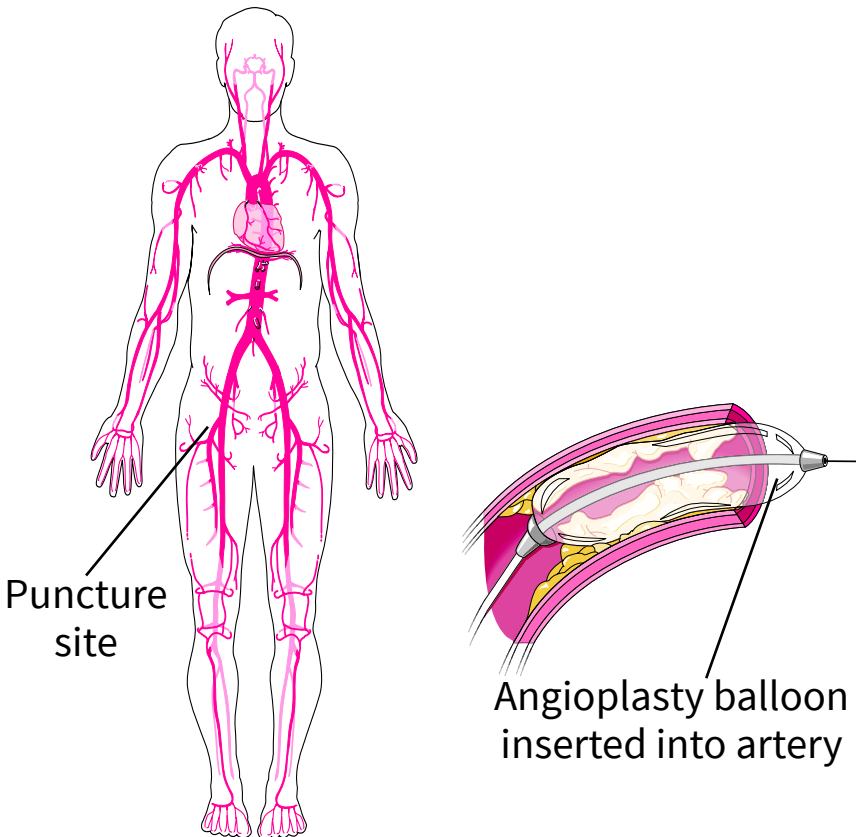
If you have any questions, please ask.

We are here to help you.

How is lower leg angioplasty done?

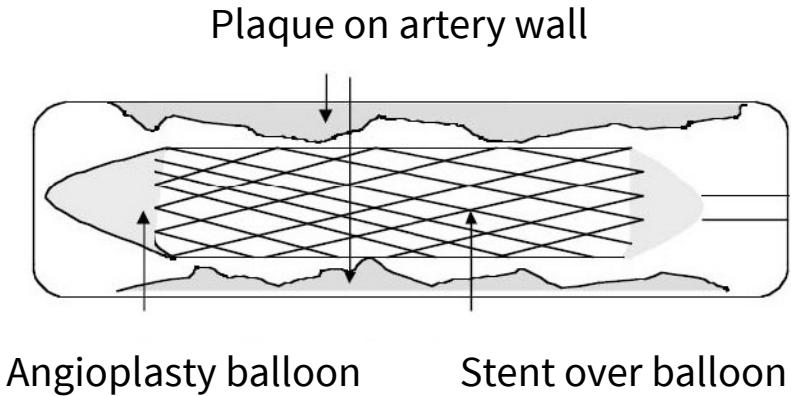
A flexible tube, called a catheter, is passed through an artery in your leg. The tube has a small balloon on the tip. Once the tube is placed into the narrowed artery, the balloon is blown up several times to clear the blockage. This makes a larger opening inside the artery and improves blood flow to your leg.

At this point, your doctor may put a stent in the newly cleared artery.



What is a stent?

A stent is permanent wire mesh. It acts as a brace to hold the artery open and prevent it from closing up again. Your doctor will decide if a stent is the best choice for you.



Are there any risks with this procedure?

You may have bleeding at the puncture site that could cause a bruise and/or a lump. There can also be some damage to the artery. There is a small chance that you may need bypass surgery if this procedure does not help.

There is a small risk of kidney problems because of the contrast (dye) needed to see the artery. Your doctor will talk with you about the risks.

Can I eat and drink before the procedure?

- Do not eat or drink after midnight on the night before your procedure.
- You may take your medicines with small sips of water.

How long will I be in bed after the procedure?

You will be in bed for up to 4 hours. This will help avoid bleeding and give the puncture site time to heal.

After your procedure

- › Lie flat on your back.
- › Do not lift your head off your 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 do any stretching such as 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 bother you, please tell your nurse. We may be able to help you by changing your position and/or giving you pain medicine.

How will I pass my urine (pee) when I am on bed rest?

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

When will my intravenous (IV) come out?

- Inpatient
 - › Your IV should come out after the tube in your groin is taken out and you are eating and drinking well. The doctor will decide when you can eat or drink.
- Outpatient
 - › The doctor will decide when you no longer need an IV.

How long will I be in the hospital?

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

How quickly will I get better?

- It takes about 1-2 weeks to get better. Plan to take it easy for the first few days. You may then go back to your normal activities.
- You may have some leg swelling due to better blood flow.
- Your leg should be raised above the level of your heart from time to time. The swelling will get less over time.
- You may feel pain at the puncture site. This will get less painful over time. **If the pain gets worse at home, call 902-473-2220 and ask for the vascular surgeon on call.**
- A bruise and/or a lump may form at the puncture site. This will get smaller over time.

If the lump gets bigger when you get home, or there is bleeding from the puncture site, press gently on the site with your hand and go to the Emergency Department right away.

Notes:

Looking for more health information?

This pamphlet and all our active patient pamphlets are searchable here:

<http://bit.ly/NSHApamphlets>

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

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

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Nova Scotia Health Authority

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Prepared by: Bonnie Heckel CNS, Vascular Surgery & Jackie Frew CNE, Central Zone ©

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If you have any questions, please ask your healthcare provider.

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