Peripheral Artery Bypass Surgery

Surgery to bypass a blocked leg artery can relieve your symptoms. The bypass is done with a graft, a special tube that reroutes blood around a blockage.

**Attaching the Graft**

Peripheral bypass grafts carry blood from the femoral artery in your thigh to an artery further down your leg. During the surgery, a graft is stitched into the artery above and below the blockage. This creates a new passage for blood flow. The blocked section of the artery is usually not removed. After the graft is in place, the incisions in the skin are closed with stitches or staples.

**Types of Grafts**

- Blood vessel grafts often come from your own leg. They are removed and prepared at the time of the bypass. In some cases, a leg vein is left in place and connected to the artery (an in situ procedure).
- Manmade (synthetic) grafts are materials easily accepted by the body. These grafts work best on arteries at or above the knee.

**Types of Peripheral Bypasses**

- **Distal bypass:** Used for the lower part of the leg. Graft may be your vein or both your vein and synthetic material.
- **Femoral popliteal bypass:** Used for the upper part of the leg. Graft may be either your own vein or synthetic material.

The type of bypass depends on where your artery is blocked.

**Risks and Complications**

- Bleeding or blood clots
- Heart attack or stroke
- Breathing problems
- Infection
- Need for second bypass or surgery to remove dead tissue (amputation)
- Nerve damage and numbness
- Complications from anesthesia

© 2000-2010 The StayWell Company, 780 Township Line Road, Yardley, PA 19067. All rights reserved. This information is not intended as a substitute for professional medical care. Always follow your healthcare professional's instructions.