

TREATING CORONARY ARTERY DISEASE

TRANSCRIPT

The goal of treating coronary artery disease is to restore blood flow to the heart. There are a variety of treatments that can help to do this. Depending on the amount of blockage in your artery, you may have an angioplasty.

"Anybody that's going to go through this process – I wouldn't actually ask them to be ecstatic about it, but I would not be afraid. And to this day, if I had to have another one done, I wouldn't be afraid to go through it again."

In an angioplasty, a catheter with a tiny balloon attached to it is inserted into your arm or leg, and moved to the narrowed area of your artery. The balloon is then inflated, pushing the plaque against the artery wall and allowing the blood to flow freely again.

Sometimes a small metal device, called a stent, is inserted into the artery. This holds the plaque against the artery wall and stays in the artery, helping to keep it open.

In some cases, your healthcare provider may perform coronary artery bypass grafting, also called heart bypass surgery. In this surgery, an expendable vein or artery from another area of your body is used to bypass the narrowed area of the coronary artery. This increases the blood flow and allows the heart to get the blood that it needs.

In addition to these procedures to treat your CAD, your healthcare provider might prescribe nitroglycerin to take if you experience possible symptoms of a heart attack, such as angina. Nitroglycerin helps to widen the blood vessels, which increases blood flow to your heart, decreasing chest pain and discomfort.

Nitroglycerin can be taken either as a pill or a spray. Put one dose under your tongue. Wait five minutes. If the discomfort continues, call 911. Continue to take your nitroglycerin as prescribed. You may be instructed to take aspirin if there is no medical reason for you not to.

Getting treatment for coronary artery disease can help improve blood flow to your heart and lessen the risk of a heart attack.

"I had 50% narrowing of the arteries, so those can never get better, but I can prevent them from getting worse."

Talk to your healthcare provider about changes you can make to help prevent your CAD from progressing.