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# Discharge Instructions After Peripheral Artery Bypass Surgery

You had a procedure known as peripheral artery bypass surgery. Peripheral arteries send blood to your legs and feet. Over time, your artery walls may thicken and build up with a fatty substance (plaque). As plaque builds up in an artery, blood flow can be reduced or even blocked. This can cause peripheral artery disease (PAD). Surgery to go around (bypass) this blockage is called peripheral artery bypass surgery. A surgeon stitches a special tube (graft) into the artery above and below the blockage. This creates a new path for blood to flow.

## Activity

- Talk with your healthcare provider about what you can and can't do as you recover.
- Don't drive for at least 7 days after your surgery or while you are taking opioid pain medicine (or if you are still having a lot of leg pain).
- Expect to start walking soon after surgery. Walking helps reduce swelling and helps your cut (incision) heal. But you will likely have some leg swelling after surgery.
- Don't stand or sit with your feet down for long. When you sit, raise your feet as high as you comfortably can.

## Home care

- Check your incision every day for signs of infection such as swelling, redness, warmth, or drainage.
- Don't bathe or soak in a tub or go swimming until your incisions are well healed (usually at least 2 weeks). You can shower to keep your incisions clean. Just make sure you dry them well afterward.
- Take your medicines exactly as directed. Don't skip doses.
- Prevent skin burns by testing the temperature of shower water before you get in.
- Wear slippers or shoes when walking. Don't go barefoot or wear open-toed shoes.
- Learn to take your pulse in your leg and your foot. Keep a record of your results. Ask your healthcare provider or nurse which pulse changes might be a problem.

## Follow-up

- See your healthcare provider to have your stitches or staples removed 10 to 14 days after your surgery.

## When to call your healthcare provider

Call your provider right away if you have any of the following:

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- Fever of 100.4°F ( 38°C) or higher, or as advised by your provider
  - Signs of infection (redness, swelling, or warmth at the incision site)
  - Drainage from your incision
  - Changes in color, temperature, feeling, or movement in either foot
  - Increasing pain or numbness in your foot or leg
  - Leg swelling that doesn't get better overnight
  - Chest pain or trouble breathing