

Balloon Angioplasty & Coronary Artery Bypass Surgery

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People with moderate narrowing of one or more coronary arteries can benefit from a procedure known as balloon angioplasty. During angioplasty, a catheter holding a deflated balloon is placed where the coronary artery is narrowed. When the balloon is inflated, it flattens the plaque against the inner wall of the coronary artery. This enlarges the inside of the artery and increases the flow of blood to the heart. To keep the artery open after the angioplasty, a small, wire-mesh tube called a stent may be inserted into the narrowed segment. The stent may be coated with a medicine to help keep the artery from narrowing again.

People with severe narrowing of the coronary arteries may need bypass surgery to restore blood flow to the heart muscle. This is known as coronary artery bypass surgery. You may have heard it called CABG or cabbage. The surgeon uses segments of veins or arteries to bypass the blocked section of the artery. These bypasses are called grafts. One end of the graft is attached to the aorta, the heart's main artery. The other end is attached to the coronary artery below the blockage. The heart now receives more blood and oxygen through the new grafts.

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