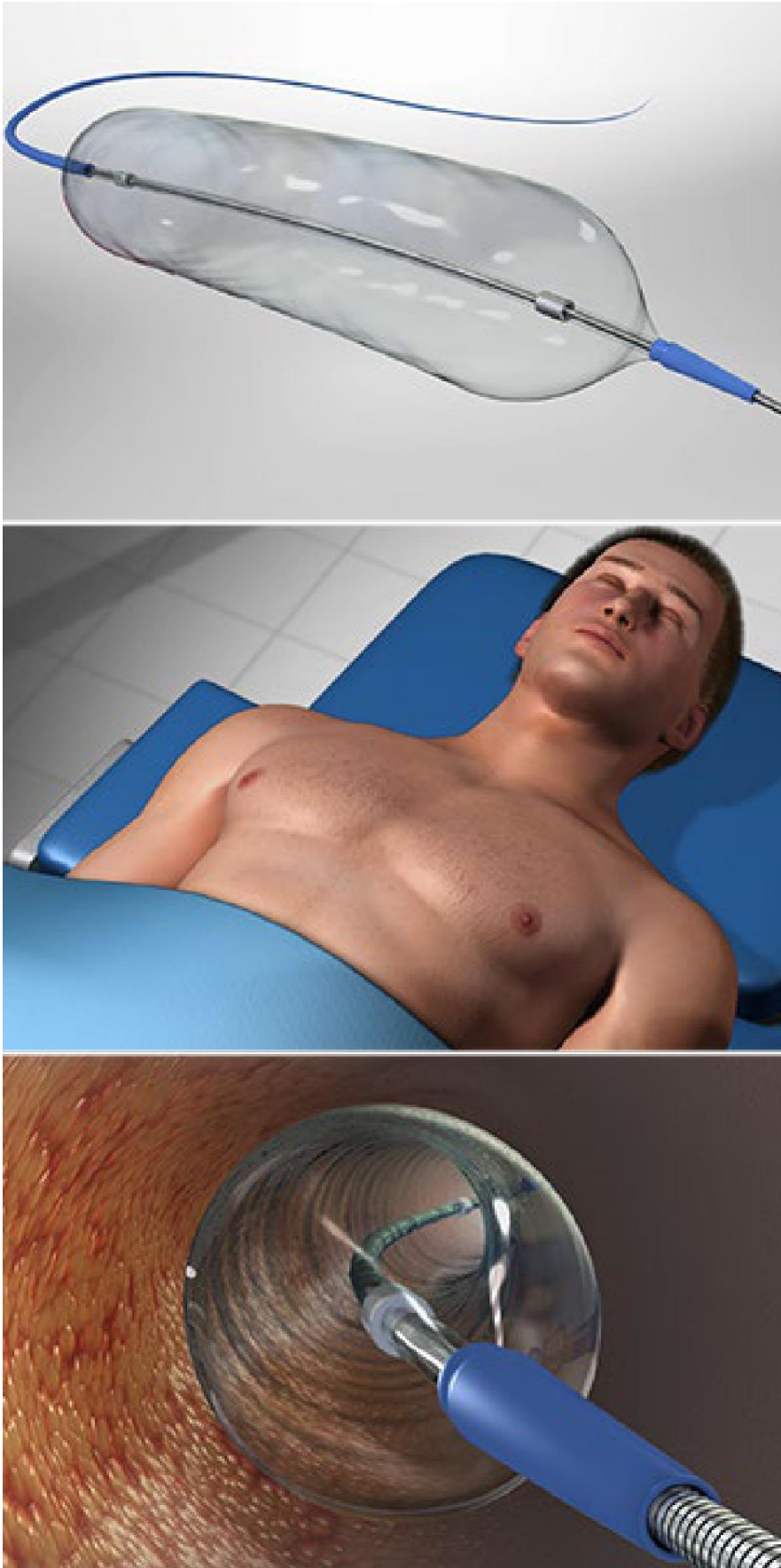




Coronary Angioplasty (PCI, PTCA)



Overview

This procedure uses a balloon-tipped catheter to open one or more arteries in your heart. After an artery is opened, a mesh stent may be placed to hold it open.

Preparation

To begin, you're given medicine to make you feel relaxed. The site where the catheter will be put in is numbed. This is commonly a blood vessel in your groin, arm or wrist.

Locating the Blockage

A small opening is made, and a protective sheath is inserted. A guide wire is put through this sheath. It's pushed through a blood vessel to your heart. Then, a catheter is pushed over the guide wire and up into the heart. Contrast dye is injected into your heart's blood vessels. The dye can be seen clearly with a video x-ray device we call a "fluoroscope." Any blockages show up on the fluoroscope.

Compressing the Plaque

To treat a blockage, a balloon-tipped catheter is pushed into the blocked artery. The balloon is inflated and deflated several times. It compresses the plaque into the wall of the artery. This widens the inside of the artery to improve blood flow. Balloons may be used to treat more than one artery.

Stenting

In many cases, after an artery has been opened, a small, expandable mesh stent is placed within it. This keeps the artery from narrowing in the future.

End of Procedure

After the procedure, you are watched in a recovery room. Your doctor will tell you when you can go home. Follow your instructions for a safe recovery.