

What is Vascular Surgery?

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Vascular surgery is performed on the blood vessels in your body. The legs are usually the area requiring surgery. The neck and abdomen are also common sites. The surgery is usually done to help correct a problem with the blood flow, such as a blockage in the artery. During the surgery, your physician will create a new pathway for the blood to flow through by using a portion of one of your veins or by using a man-made or synthetic tube. This is called a graft.

Is there specific care for my wound?

Following surgery, you will have a dressing covering your incision, or surgical wound. After a few days, your physician or nurse will remove the dressing and leave the sutures (stitches) or staples exposed to air. These may stay in place until after you are discharged. It may be necessary to cover them lightly with a bandage if your clothing sticks or catches on them.

It is important to watch for signs and symptoms of potential infection. These signs & symptoms include:

- Redness
- Swelling
- Increased pain or bleeding at the incision site.
- Odor
- Drainage

Monitor your temperature and notify the physician if it is greater than 101°F or if you experience any of the above symptoms.

Pain Management

It is not uncommon for patients to have some discomfort after this surgery. It is important that you do not allow the pain to become severe before asking for

medication. Please tell your nurse or physician if your pain medication does not control your pain.

Respiratory Care

It is very important that you do not smoke after this surgery. Smoking further decreases the amount of oxygen that is available for your body. During your hospital stay, be sure to use the Incentive Spirometer and to cough and deep breathe as directed. If your wound is on your abdomen, cover it with your hand, pillow or blanket when you cough. This is called splinting and it lessens the discomfort.

Foot and Leg Care

It is very important for you to give your feet and legs proper care because of your problems with blood flow. This care includes the following:

- Always wear footwear to prevent cutting your feet or stubbing your toes.
- Keep your legs and feet clean—wash with soap and water daily and dry thoroughly. Use moisturizing lotion to prevent drying and cracking. Wear clean, cotton socks daily.
- Inspect your legs and feet daily for cuts, abrasions or open sores. Call your physician if you notice sores developing on your legs or feet—this may mean further problems with your circulation.
- Avoid: sitting or standing for long periods of time, crossing legs, exposure to extreme hot or cold, wearing constrictive clothing such as knee-hi's, tight stockings, or girdles.

Blood Flow

After surgery, it is important for you to rise slowly as you may feel light-headed or dizzy. Sit at the side of the bed for short periods of time before standing—this is called “dangling.”

The following are important guidelines:

- Sit only for meals and when toileting
- Do not cross your legs or do deep knee bends
- You will probably have on either ace bandages or special stockings after surgery called “anti-embolytic” stockings. These help the blood flow in your legs. Use these as prescribed by your physician.
- Tell your nurse or physician of any change in feeling, color, or temperature of your legs.

Nutrition

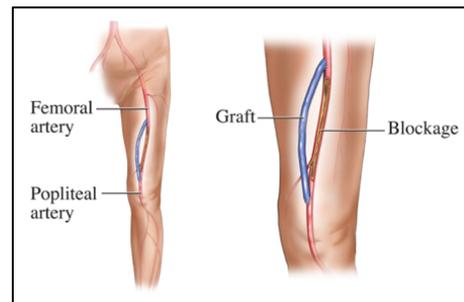
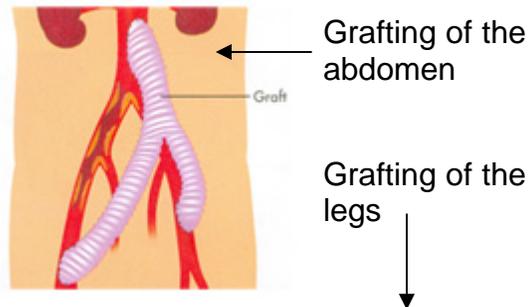
Your diet will usually be clear liquids immediately after surgery and will then be increased as you recover. An appointment with a dietician can be arranged if you would like. Please let your nurse know. During your recovery, it is very important to eat healthy meals to promote healing.

Are there any special instructions for discharge?

Please review the following instructions, which will assist you after you have been discharged:

1. Check with your physician before doing any of the following:
 - a. Increasing your activity
 - b. Driving or riding in a car
 - c. Resuming sexual activity
 - d. Lifting any items
 - e. Showering or taking baths

2. Call your physician if you experience any of the following:
 - a. Increased pain
 - b. Bleeding, other drainage, or a foul odor from your incision line
 - c. Your incision line becomes red, swollen, or opens up
 - d. You develop a fever of 101°F
3. Do not cross your legs
4. Balance your periods of rest and activity with the way you feel
5. When sitting, use a straight back firm-seated chair with arms (not a low over-stuffed chair). Always make sure your feet rest comfortably on the ground, or elevated if directed by your physician.
6. Take your medications as prescribed
7. Keep your follow-up appointments with your physician
8. Do not smoke
9. Follow instructions for leg and foot care.



Source:
Danbury Hospital Department of Vascular Surgery
Society for Vascular Surgery @ www.vascularweb.org