Balloon Pump

The Balloon Pump, also called an Intra-Aortic Balloon Pump (IABP), is a machine that helps the heart pump blood through the body. It is used when the heart is not able to pump enough blood by itself. This may occur:

- After a severe heart attack
- After open heart surgery
- In severe heart muscle weakness, called cardiomyopathy

About the Balloon Pump

A tube with the balloon on it is put into a large blood vessel, called an artery, in the groin. It is then moved through this vessel to a larger vessel, known as the aorta, just outside the heart. The balloon tube may be put in:

- At the bedside
- During open heart surgery
- In the heart catheterization lab

The tube with the balloon connects to the balloon pump machine. The balloon pump helps move the blood by inflating and deflating the balloon with each heartbeat. There are several alarms on the machine that will alert the nurse of problems that may occur.
A person on a balloon pump must stay in bed while they are connected to the machine. The head of the bed can only be raised slightly and the leg with the tube must be kept straight at all times. This will prevent the tube from bending and allow the pump to work correctly.

The balloon tube is left in place until the heart can pump enough blood on its own.

If you have any questions or concerns about this treatment, please ask your doctor or nurse.

Talk to your doctor or others on your health care team if you have questions. You may request more written information from the Library for Health Information at (614) 293-3707 or email: health-info@osu.edu.