Your Hospital Stay After Leg Artery Bypass Surgery

The hospital stay after leg artery bypass surgery varies with the type of bypass that is done and your condition. The hospital stay can last from 2 to 4 days. If the bypass extends to the blood vessels below the knee, your stay may be 3 to 4 days. Your discharge will be determined by:

- How well your pain in managed
- How well you are walking
- How well your incision or wound is healing

Some patients will need to start blood thinning medicine, such as Warfarin (Coumadin) after surgery. This may also extend your stay by several days.

This guide is intended to help you understand your hospital stay. Each patient may recover differently. This plan may be changed to meet your needs. If you have any questions or special needs, tell your doctor or nurse.

The Day of Surgery

After surgery, you will be on a heart monitor, be given oxygen and have your vital signs, such as blood pressure and temperature, checked often.

- Pain medicine will be available if you are not comfortable. Tell your doctor or nurse if your pain is not being managed by the medicines you are currently taking so that medicines can be changed.
- You may need to have blood draws for laboratory testing. This depends on the medicines your doctor has prescribed for you.

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You will need to breathe deeply and cough to clear your lungs after surgery. Your nurse will teach you how to use a device called an incentive spirometer. You will use this device every hour you are awake. This is to prevent problems after surgery. For more information, read the handout, How to Use an Incentive Spirometer.

To remove urine from the body, you may have a Foley catheter. This is a thin, flexible tube that goes from your bladder and empties outside the urethra to collect in a bag.

To check your alertness, you will be asked your name and the day of the week.

The night after surgery, your nurse will wake you up often to check the pulse in your legs. Alertness will be checked both during the day and at night.

**The Day after Surgery**

- You will be able to eat something today.
- You may have the oxygen support removed. And the Foley catheter used to drain urine may be removed.
- Continue to breathe deeply and cough. Use the incentive spirometer every hour you are awake.
- The circulation in your legs will be checked by taking blood pressures in your ankles.
- You will be assisted in getting out of bed and beginning to walk. The first time may only be a few steps to the chair. Each time you get out of bed, the goal is to walk a little farther.

**Day Two after Surgery**

- The goal for day 2 is to have a normal temperature, and have all tubes, oxygen and monitors removed.
- You will work to walk short distances in the hallway. If you need a walker or cane to use at home, this will be ordered for you before leaving the hospital (discharge).
- The bandages covering your incisions or wounds will be removed or changed.
- Continue to breathe deeply and cough. Use the incentive spirometer every hour you are awake.
- You will be taught about your care at home. This includes how to change dressings for your incisions. If you need help from family members when going home, have them be present when talking about incision care.

**Leaving the Hospital**

You will be able to go home when:

- You are able to walk short distances in the hallway. If you need a walker or cane to use at home this can be ordered for you before your discharge.
- You have a normal temperature.
- All tubes, oxygen and monitors have been removed.
- You understand the instructions for your care at home. If you have any questions or concerns about your care or recovery, please talk with your doctor or nurse before leaving the hospital.

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.