



## ANGIOPLASTY

### Patient Information

Fatty deposits (plaques) that have accumulated on the inside of the coronary arteries can narrow these passages considerably, causing blood flow to the heart to be dangerously reduced. Providing adequate circulation to the heart muscle is important to prevent a heart attack. Percutaneous transluminal coronary angioplasty (PTCA) and bypass surgery are two procedures that can improve the blood supply. They are performed on people who have chest pain (angina) and sometimes on those who have had a heart attack.

#### Who is a candidate for PTCA?

Angioplasty is not for everyone with coronary artery disease. Whether you are a good candidate for this procedure depends on the severity of your coronary artery disease and the overall functioning of your heart. Your doctor will perform a cardiac catheterization to obtain a coronary angiogram. These x-ray studies show the number and exact location of blockages. Only after a complete evaluation is done can he decide whether you should have angioplasty or bypass surgery.

#### What is PTCA?

Balloon angioplasty, also known as percutaneous transluminal coronary angioplasty (PTCA), is done during cardiac catheterization. A thin, plastic tube, called a catheter, is inserted into a blood vessel in either the right groin or the right arm. Once it is positioned into the coronary artery near the narrowed portion, a smaller catheter with a deflated balloon at its tip is threaded through the cardiac catheter. When the balloon catheter reaches the narrowed portion, the balloon is inflated to flatten the fatty deposit against the artery wall. The balloon may be inflated and deflated several times.

The procedure is monitored on an x-ray screen that magnifies the images so the doctor can observe when the artery is open sufficiently. Once the artery is opened and blood is flowing more freely through the vessel, the balloon catheter is removed.

You can expect the recovery period to be similar to that following cardiac catheterization. However, you may be kept in the hospital for 1 or 2 days after PTCA to ensure no complications develop.

#### How safe is PTCA?

PTCA is a very safe procedure with few complications. Occasionally, emergency bypass surgery is necessary. For this reason, PTCA is performed with a heart surgery team standing by. However, this occurs in less than 5% of people who have PTCA.

#### How effective is PTCA?

The dilated portion of the artery narrows again in about 30% of people who have the PTCA. When this happens, the patient is reevaluated to determine whether PTCA should be repeated or bypass surgery performed.

#### Home instruction.

You will be sent home with certain medications to prevent the formation of blood clots, which helps keep the newly opened arteries open. It is important that you take these drugs as prescribed.

Your doctor will give you specific instructions on when you can return to work, resume driving, and engage in sexual activity. In general, you should avoid any heavy lifting or demanding work for at least the first week. You may feel soreness over the groin area. **If you begin to experience a return of chest pain, it is important that you notify your doctor immediately.**