

Bypass surgery

Coronary artery bypass graft (CABG) surgery is recommended to certain patients with coronary artery disease, particularly those who fail to respond to medical treatment, or are not suitable for percutaneous transluminal angioplasty (PTCA).

PTCA is a surgical technique used to open a hole in a blockage in a coronary artery to allow blood to flow smoothly. The procedure is highly recommended to people with more than one blockage in a coronary artery or in the artery's branches.

CABG surgery on the other hand uses a blood vessel taken from the chest or leg to bypass a narrowed or blocked coronary artery. It involves creating a new blood vessel (called a graft) from lengths of vein taken from the leg. The new vessel is then used to connect the aorta (the main artery supplying blood from the heart to the rest of the body) to a point beyond the blockage, thus bypassing the blockage. The body can continue to function as usual without the blood vessels taken for the grafts.

Another bypass method involves diverting an internal mammary artery in the chest wall.

Most patients remain in hospital for about a week after surgery. A rehabilitation programme is provided to help them recover satisfactorily and become fitter. The patient can usually return to work after six weeks of rest, or even sooner if his or her work is not strenuous.

To prevent heart problems from occurring, one should not smoke, should exercise regularly, watch one's weight, blood pressure and diabetic condition, and avoid fatty food.