

Coronary Stents

Coronary arteries are the blood vessels that carry blood and oxygen to the heart muscle. When an artery is narrowed or blocked, your doctor may suggest implanting a coronary stent to help your heart muscle get the blood it needs.

What is a stent?

A stent is a small metal coil or mesh tube that is placed in a narrowed or blocked artery. The stent will stay in the artery to hold it open, improving blood flow to the heart muscle.

Your stent implant

A cardiologist uses a catheter, a long, thin flexible tube, to put the stent in place. This procedure may take 30 minutes to an hour. You will be awake, but will be given medication to help you relax.

Before the procedure

- Tell your doctor if you have bleeding problems or an allergy to iodine (shellfish, seafood).
- You may be told not to drink or eat anything after midnight the night before your scheduled procedure.
- You will be given an IV line for fluids.
- The skin where the catheter is to be inserted will be cleansed and numbed (usually the groin area).

During the procedure

- The doctor uses a sheath and a guiding catheter to reach the blocked blood vessel.
- Contrast dye is then injected through the catheter allowing the doctor to see the artery clearly.
- The stent is placed over a special catheter and guided to the narrowed or blocked artery.
- The stent is then expanded and catheters are removed. The stent stays in place.

After the procedure

- You will have to remain flat in bed with your leg still for several hours after the procedure.
- You will have your blood pressure and insertion site checked frequently.
- You will be placed on a special medication, such as Plavix, to assist in the prevention of blood clots. **Please take this pill as directed by your doctor.**