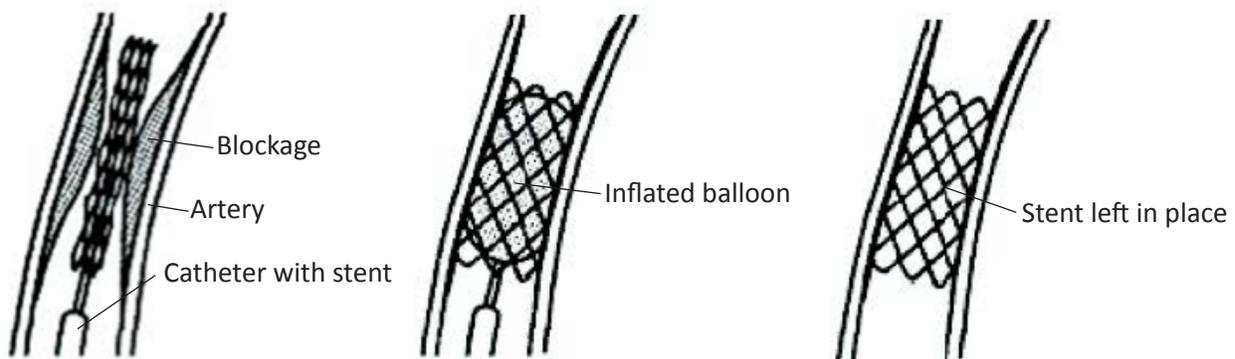


Protecting Your Stent

A stent is a wire mesh, stainless steel tube that holds an artery open and keeps it from closing again. It is inserted into an artery with a balloon catheter. When the balloon is inflated, the stent stays in place (Figure 1). This allows blood to flow freely through the artery. A stent becomes a permanent part of your artery.

Figure 1. Stent placed in the artery



You have _____ stent(s) placed in blood vessel(s) of your:

- Heart
- Brain
- Leg
- Kidney
- Other _____

Your stent type(s):

- Bare metal
- Drug-releasing

Medications that protect your stent

Blood clots can form within the stent and restrict the blood flow, which could cause serious injury or death. It is important to take medicine to help reduce the risk of blood clots. Antiplatelet medicines prevent platelets in the blood from clumping together, which may block the stent. These medicines include:

- Clopidogrel (Plavix®)
- Ticagrelor (Brilinta®)
- Prasugrel (Effient®)

The amount of time you are on this medicine will depend on your stent and your condition. Aspirin also helps to reduce the risk of blood clots. You and your physician will make a plan for which medicines you will take and for how long.

Risks of bleeding

While antiplatelet medicines are needed to reduce the risk of blood clots, these medicines may cause more bleeding if you have a cut or surgery. Do not stop taking your antiplatelet medicine or aspirin unless you are told to do so by the physician who placed the stent.

Signs and symptoms of bleeding include:

- Red or pink urine
- Black tarry, sticky stool
- Vomit that looks like coffee grounds
- Bloody nose or any bleed that last longer than 20 to 30 minutes

If you have any of these signs or symptoms, contact your physician immediately and/or go to the nearest emergency room.

Protect yourself

- Always check with your physician who placed the stent before you stop taking your antiplatelet medicine or aspirin.
- Know where your stent(s) are in your body and what medicines you are taking.
- Carry a medicine card/list in your wallet or purse that has information about your care and treatment.
- Be sure to tell all of your physicians, including your eye physician and dentist, that you have a stent. Tell them what medicines you take.
- **If you have a history of heart failure, heart attack or stroke, or have a stent in your heart, do not use non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs), such as ibuprofen (Advil®) or naproxen (Aleve®).** These drugs increase your risk of another heart attack or stroke. Use acetaminophen (Tylenol®) for pain, fever, colds or headaches, as needed.