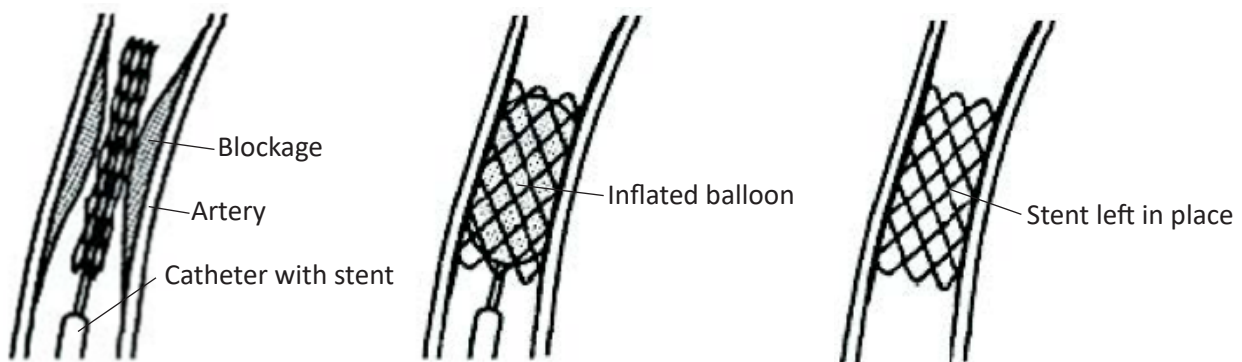


Protecting Your Stent

A stent is a wire mesh, stainless steel tube. It holds an artery open and keeps it from closing again. Your physician uses a balloon catheter to insert the stent into an artery. When your physician inflates the balloon, 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. This can restrict the blood flow. It could cause serious injury or death. It is important to take medication to help reduce the risk of blood clots. Antiplatelet medications prevent platelets in the blood from clumping together. This may block the stent. These medications include:

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

The amount of time you are on this medication will depend on your stent and your condition. You and your physician will make a plan for which medications you will take and for how long.

Risks of bleeding

While antiplatelet medications can reduce the risk of blood clots, they may cause more bleeding if you have a cut or surgery. Do not stop taking your antiplatelet medication unless the physician who placed the stent tells you to do so.

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 right away 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 medication.
- Know the location of your stent in your body and what medications you are taking.
- Always carry a medication card/list with you that has information about your care and treatment.
- Be sure to tell all your physicians, including your eye physician and dentist, that you have a stent. Tell them what medications 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®) as needed for pain, fever, colds or headaches.
- Before starting any new over-the-counter medications or herbal supplements, please be sure to speak with a physician or pharmacist. Many over-the-counter medications or herbal supplements may interact with the medications that help protect your stent.