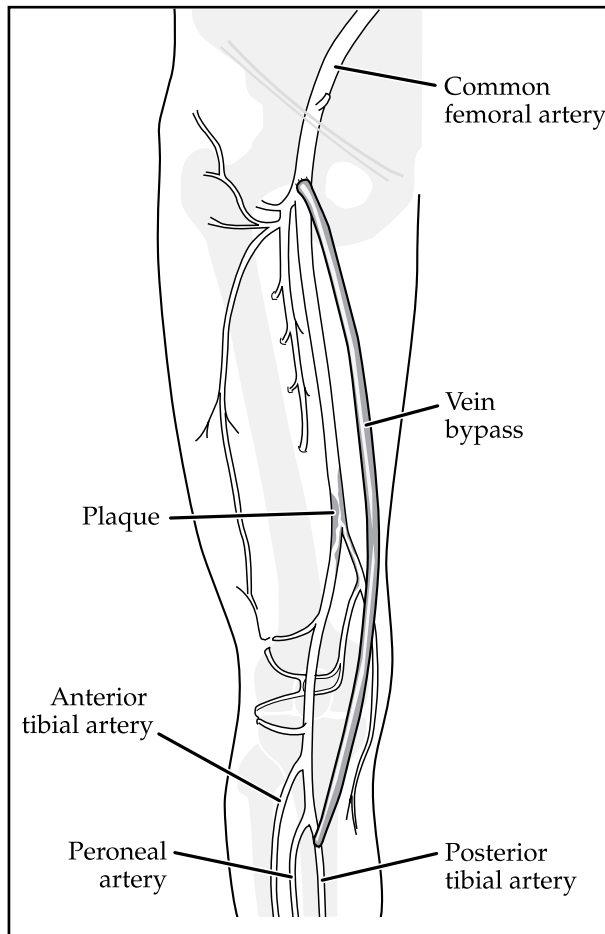
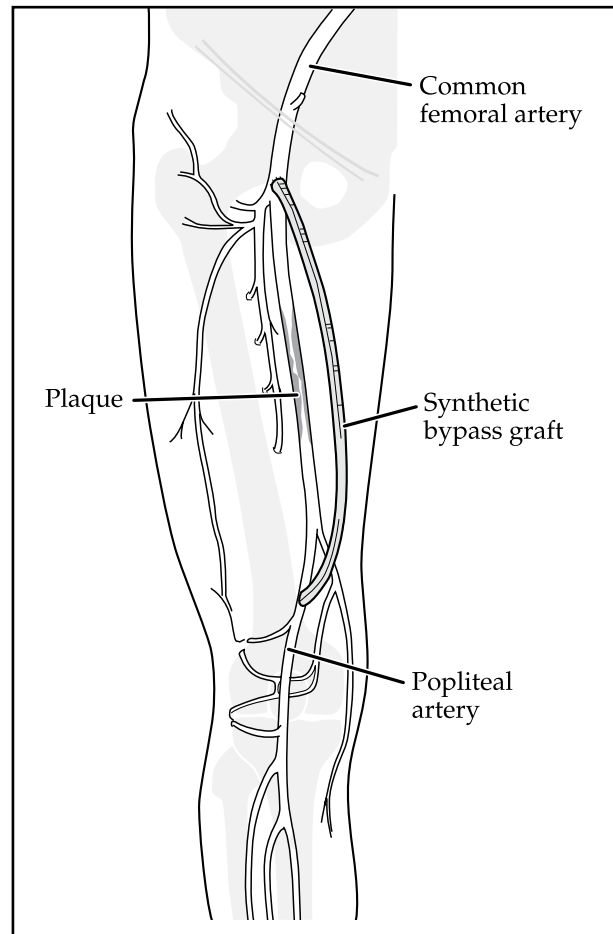


What Is a Leg Bypass?



A



All illustrations © Allina Health System

B

What Is a Leg Bypass?

Blockages can be caused by plaque build-up in the arteries of your leg. This can affect blood flow to your legs and feet. Surgery to bypass blocked leg arteries may last 3 to 6 hours. Your incision sites depend on the location of the blockage and the type of graft used.

During the surgery, the graft is stitched into the artery above and below the blockage. This creates a new route for blood flow to your foot.

The two types of surgeries are:

- a femoral-posterior tibial bypass: a large vein used for the graft (A)
- a synthetic graft: a femoral-above the knee popliteal bypass with a synthetic graft (B).

After surgery, the nurses will watch the circulation in your leg and foot closely.

(over)

Peripheral Artery Disease

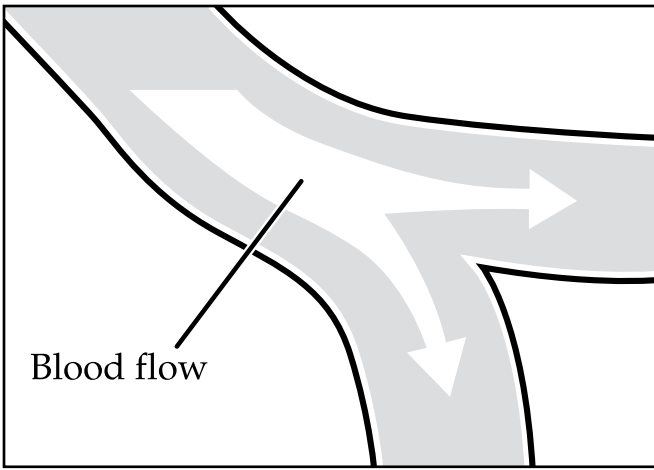
You may have circulation problems that have to do with your blood vessels. You may feel cramps, numbness or muscle fatigue when you exercise. These feelings may be caused by atherosclerosis, which interferes with blood flow through your blood vessels. This is also known as peripheral artery disease (PAD).

Normally, an artery has a smooth inner wall that allows blood to pass freely (A). In PAD, cholesterol and plaque (a fatty deposit) collect on the insides of the walls of your blood vessels. This is most common in your legs.

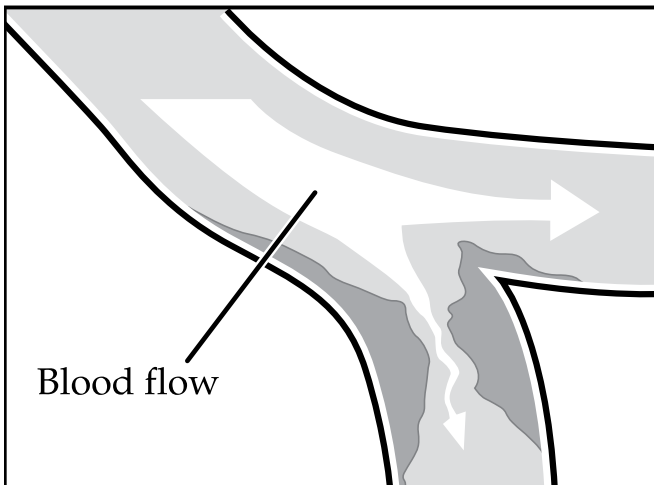
If plaque keeps collecting, your blood flow is reduced (B). When you exercise, your blood flow may not meet your body's need for extra oxygen. Your leg may cramp or feel tired after walking short distances.

Blood flow may be completely blocked by plaque or blood clots in an already narrow artery (C).

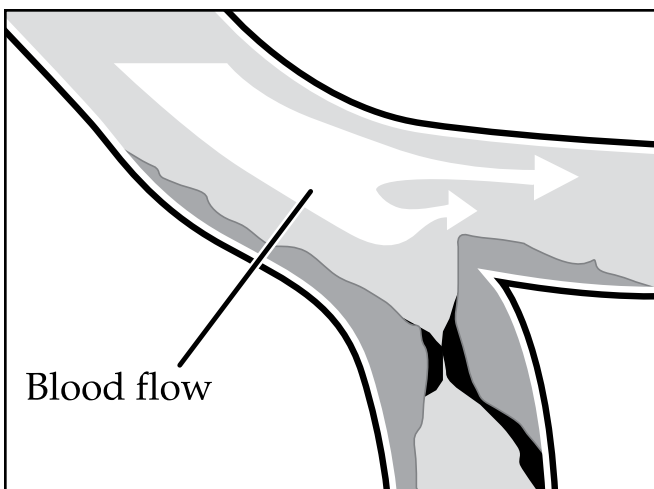
Without a constant supply of oxygen, tissue below the blockage can be permanently damaged. You will need treatment to prevent the loss of your foot or part of your leg.



A



B



C