

Managing Your Pain After Vascular Surgery

Pain Control

You should expect to have some pain after your vascular surgery.

Your health care team will work with you to help control your pain.

Why You Will Have Pain

Pain can be caused by:

- an incision or puncture site (from an angiogram catheter). The amount of pain you have will depend on the size of the incision, amount of swelling or bleeding and your response to pain.
- a lack of blood flow in your arteries
- surgery to increase blood flow in your arteries. This can cause temporary swelling (and pain) of your affected leg.

Creating a Pain Goal After Surgery

Pain is unique to each person. Pain that is severe to one person may be mild to another. It is important that you have a realistic pain goal.

You will be asked to rate your pain on a scale of zero (no pain) to 10 (worst possible pain).

If you expect your pain score to be zero, you will likely be discouraged. You can expect to have some amount of pain. Your health care team will help you feel as comfortable as possible.

Allina Health Pain Scale (0 to 10)

10	<p style="text-align: center;">Worst Possible Pain</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ unbearable ■ devastating ■ crushing ■ excruciating
8-9	<p style="text-align: center;">Very Severe Pain</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ dreadful ■ overwhelming ■ horrible ■ agonizing
6-7	<p style="text-align: center;">Severe Pain</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ miserable ■ gnawing ■ fierce ■ piercing
4-5	<p style="text-align: center;">Moderate Pain</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ aggravating ■ grueling ■ upsetting ■ frustrating
1-3	<p style="text-align: center;">Mild Pain</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ bothersome ■ annoying ■ irritating ■ nagging
0	No Pain

You will be asked to rate your pain after surgery.

Using Medicine to Treat Your Pain

You will have pain medicine to take, if needed. Your nurse will ask you if you have pain and create a schedule for your pain medicine.

It is important for you to speak up if you are having pain or your pain is not under control after you receive medicine. Press your nurse call button to talk with your nurse.

It is also important to tell your nurse if you are having side effects from pain medicine:

(over)

- nausea (upset stomach)
- feeling drowsy
- constipation
- other unusual feelings.

Using Non-medicine Ways to Treat Your Pain

There are also non-medicine ways to control your pain. For example, if you have surgery to increase blood flow in your arteries, you can get relief from leg swelling by elevating (raising) your leg on pillows.

Talk to your nurse if you are interested in any of these options:

- walking
- back rub
- emotional support
- heat therapy or cold therapy
- music
- relaxation
- rest
- noise reduction
- aromatherapy
- acupuncture
- massage
- prayer or spiritual care
- change in positions
- change in temperature
- change in lighting.

Managing Your Pain at Home

Your pain will slowly improve and likely go away. This may take days or weeks. This means you will need to manage your pain at home.

Before you leave the hospital, you will receive activity restrictions and, most likely, a prescription medicine to help control your pain. You will also have the surgery office's phone number to call in case your pain isn't under control.

Videos About Pain

If you are able to use the Internet, log on to allinahealth.org/surgery to watch four short videos about pain:

- Part 1: Pain Expectations
- Part 2: Rating your Pain
- Part 3: Pain Treatment Options
- Part 4: Home Pain Management.

You can watch these videos as often as you like.

Whom to Call for More Information

Please call the surgeon's office at 612-863-6800 if you have questions or concerns about pain or your surgery.

Please call your regular health care provider if you have general questions or concerns about your health.