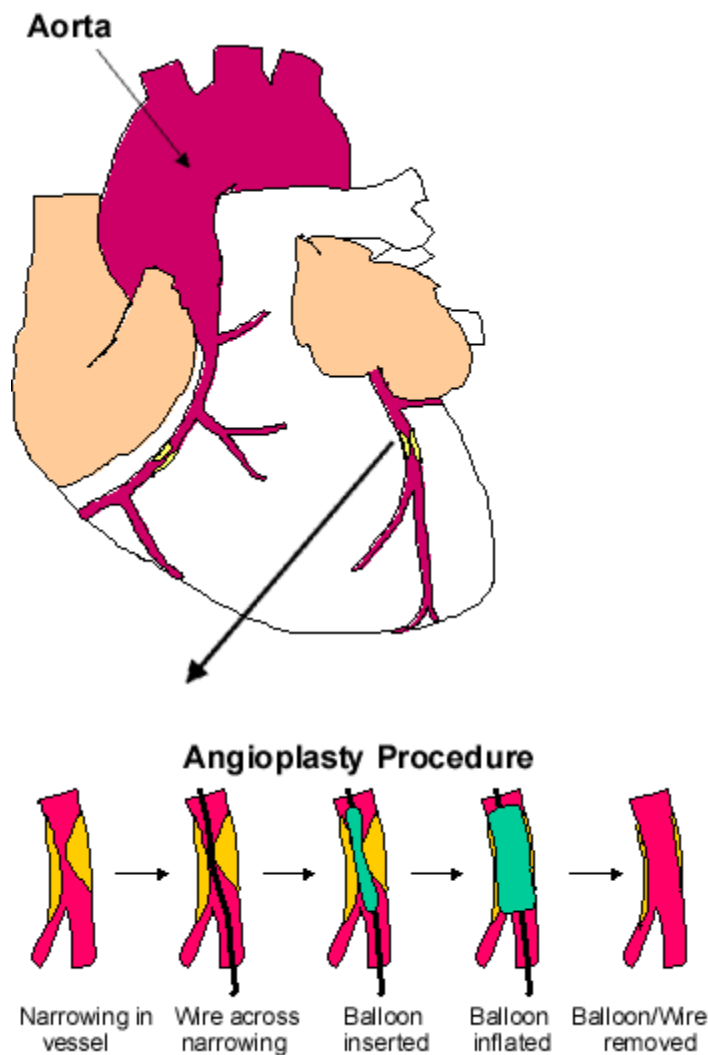


Angioplasty - what is it?

Angioplasty is a specialised treatment for narrowed or blocked coronary arteries. It involves placing a balloon of the correct size into the narrowed blood vessel. The balloon is then blown up pushing out the narrowed segment.



A sudden narrowing due to clotting at the time of the treatment or a tear in the inner wall of the blood vessel may occur but these are much less problematic complications today due to the

availability of new drugs to prevent clotting and stents to seal any tears in the arteries.

While the balloon is inflated in the artery, you may feel chest discomfort (like your angina) in the chest as blood cannot flow along the vessel. The pain only lasts while the balloon is inflated which is usually for about 1 minute.

Once the angioplasty and stent is completed, patients usually stay overnight in hospital before going home. This is to ensure that no problems have arisen after the procedure and also to allow time for the small site where the tubes were inserted to heal.

Good relief of pain can be obtained with an angioplasty and stent. In the long term however, about one in ten patients redevelop their anginal symptoms due to narrowing in the stented artery and have to undergo the procedure again. The risk of renarrowing in a stent is related to a number of factors. Firstly the characteristics of the patient if important eg. if they are diabetic or have high cholesterol, the size of the artery stented and the type of stent used, whether it is a coated stent or a bare metal stent.