

5. What should I expect during coronary bypass surgery?

*Surgeons take a segment of a healthy blood vessel from another part of the body and make a detour around the blocked part of the coronary artery.*

*An artery may be detached from the chest wall and the open end attached to the coronary artery below the blocked area.*

*A piece of a long vein in your leg may be taken. One end is sewn above the blocked area and the other end of the vein is attached or "grafted" to the coronary artery below the blocked area.*

*Either way, blood can use this new path to flow freely to the heart muscle.*

*A patient may undergo one, two, three or more bypass grafts, depending on how many coronary arteries are blocked.*

*Cardiopulmonary bypass with a pump oxygenator (heart-lung machine) is used for most coronary bypass graft operations. This means that besides the surgeon, other surgical staff members include a cardiac anesthesiologist, surgical nurses, and a perfusionist (blood flow specialist).*