

## Flow-Diverting Stent

### *How to prepare and what to expect*

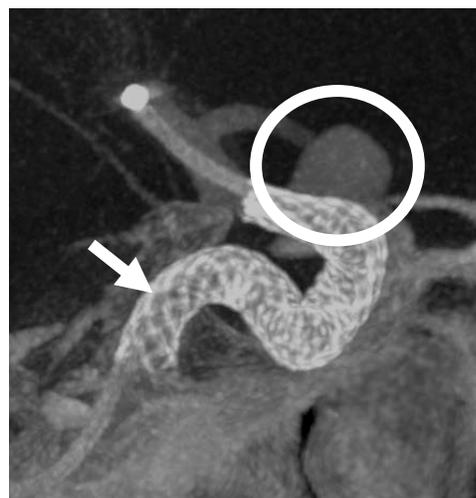
*This handout explains a flow-diverting stent. It includes how to prepare for your procedure, what to expect, and self-care at home.*

### What is a flow-diverting stent?

A *stent* is a small tube. A *flow-diverting stent* is placed in an *artery* (blood vessel) to keep blood from entering an *aneurysm* (a diseased weak point in the arterial wall).

To place your stent, your doctors will use:

- A *minimally invasive procedure* that uses only a *small incision (puncture)*
- X-ray images to guide their work
- *Contrast (X-ray dye)* to help the details of your blood vessels show up more clearly in the X-rays



*The arrow points to the stent. The circle shows the aneurysm that is being treated.*

### How do I prepare?

- You will need to take blood thinners such as aspirin or clopidogrel (Plavix) once a day for 1 week before your procedure, and for 6 months or longer after your procedure.
- You will come to the clinic for a pre-surgery visit. You will meet with:
  - A **nurse**, who will give you information and instructions
  - A **pre-anesthesia nurse**, who will talk with you about the medicines that will be used during your procedure
  - The **neurosurgical team**, who will answer any questions you have about the procedure
  - Your **patient care coordinator**, who will make sure you have all your follow-up visits scheduled before your day of surgery

## Day Before Your Procedure

A nurse will call you to review your instructions. The nurse will ask if you:

- Have allergies to any medicines, contrast, or shellfish
- Take warfarin (Coumadin), metformin (diabetes medicine), or other medicines that must be stopped before your procedure

The nurse will also remind you:

- **To stop eating at least 6 hours before your procedure.**
- **Not to eat or drink anything starting at least 2 hours before you arrive for your procedure.**

## Day of Your Procedure

### At Home

- Up until **8 hours** before you arrive at the hospital, eat a healthy, balanced diet.
- Up until **6 hours** before you arrive at the hospital, eat a light meal. Avoid heavy foods, such as those with a large amount of fat.
- Up until **2 hours** before you arrive at the hospital, we encourage you to drink clear liquids such as water, plain tea or coffee (no milk or creamer), clear broth, Gatorade, soda, apple juice, or Boost Breeze liquid supplement.
  - **If you have diabetes:** Drink clear liquids such as water, plain tea or coffee (no milk or creamer), clear broth, and diet soda. Avoid juice, regular soda, and sports drinks, since these can raise your blood sugar levels.
- **Starting 2 hours** before you arrive at the hospital, do not eat or drink anything, unless your doctor or nurse has told you otherwise.
- If you must take medicines, take them with **only** a small sip of water.

### At the Hospital

- Check into Surgery on the Ground Floor of the Maleng Building.
- A nurse will greet you and help prepare you for your procedure.
- The nurse will review your health history and discharge instructions.
- Our transport service will take you on a stretcher to a holding area.
- The Radiology nurse will greet you and place small patches called *electrodes* on your chest. These electrodes help us monitor your heart during the procedure.

- The Neurosurgery Team will review the consent form with you.
- An *intravenous* (IV) tube will be placed into a vein in your arm. A *sedative* (medicine that helps you relax) will be given through the IV.
- You will be taken into the Angiography Suite.
- You will be given *general anesthesia* (medicine to make you sleep).

## **During Your Procedure**

- You will be asleep during your procedure.
- A small tube called a *catheter* will be inserted into your *femoral artery* (blood vessel in your thigh). Your doctor will use X-ray images to safely guide the catheter past the aneurysm.
- Contrast will be injected through the catheter. X-rays will be taken while the dye moves through your artery.
- The stent will be placed in the artery.
- The procedure will last about 2 to 3 hours.

## **After Your Procedure**

- You will be taken back to the procedure area. Your friends and family can join you there.
- To keep blood from leaking at the puncture site, you must lie flat for the next 6 hours. During this time, your nurses will:
  - Monitor you closely
  - Tilt your bed so you can eat
  - Help you use a bed pan if you need to urinate
  - Help you change position if you are not comfortable
  - Check your vital signs and your level of awareness
  - Check your procedure site every hour
- After 6 hours, your nurses will help you get up and walk.
- Most patients stay in the hospital for 1 night after this procedure.
- You must have a responsible adult with you when you are ready to leave.

## **Follow-up Care**

- You will have follow-up exams 6 months and 12 months after your procedure. These important exams will help your neurosurgeon monitor your progress.

- It can take 6 months to 1 year for the aneurysm to close all the way. Your neurosurgeon will talk with you about any other tests or treatments you may need.

## **Recovery At Home**

Your health is important to us. A nurse will call you the day after your procedure to ask how you are doing and answer your questions.

### **For 24 Hours**

Medicine you were given for the procedure can affect your judgment. For your safety, for 24 hours after your procedure:

- Do **not** drink alcohol.
- Do **not** drive or use machinery.
- Do **not** sign legal papers or make important decisions.
- Do **not** be responsible for the care of another person.

### **Self-care**

- You may remove the dressing after 24 hours and take a shower.
- For mild to moderate pain, you may take *non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs* (NSAIDs) such as ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin) or naproxen (Aleve, Naprosyn). Follow dose instructions on the bottle.
- Walk often to speed your recovery. It is OK to walk up and down stairs.

### **For 7 Days After Your Procedure**

- Do **not** take baths or allow the puncture site to be covered in water.
- Do **not** do any deep knee bending.
- Do **not** do strenuous exercise (anything that increases your heart rate or makes you breathe hard).
- Do **not** lift anything that weighs more than 10 pounds (1 gallon of milk weighs almost 9 pounds).

## **What to Expect**

After this procedure, it is normal to have:

- Bruising and tenderness in your groin area (this should go away after a few days)
- Short-term hair loss (it will grow back)
- A dull headache for 1 to 2 weeks

## When to Call for Help

Remember that some bruising at the incision site is normal.

### Call 911 right away if you:

- Begin to bleed at your incision site – apply constant pressure while you wait for help to arrive
- Develop a lump at your groin area
- Have any signs of a stroke, such as:
  - Weakness or loss of feeling
  - Having trouble talking
  - Having trouble walking
  - Having trouble seeing
  - A severe headache that starts suddenly

### Questions?

Your questions are important. Call your healthcare provider if you have questions or concerns.

Weekdays from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., call 206.744.9340 and press 2 to talk with a clinic nurse.

After hours and on holidays and weekends, call the Community Care Line (24-hour nurse): 206.744.2500 or toll-free 800.607.5501.