

Aortobifemoral Surgery

A peripheral vascular bypass, also called a lower extremity bypass, is the surgical re-routing of blood flow around an obstructed artery that supplies blood to the legs and feet. This surgery is performed when the build-up of fatty deposits (plaque) in an artery has blocked the normal flow of blood that carries oxygen and nutrients to the lower extremities. Bypass surgery re-routes blood from above the obstructed portion of an artery to another vessel below the obstruction.

A bypass surgery is named for the artery that will be bypassed and the arteries that will receive the re-routed blood. The three common peripheral vascular bypass surgeries are:

- Aortobifemoral bypass surgery, which re-routes blood from the abdominal aorta to the two femoral arteries in the groin.
- Femoropopliteal bypass (fem-pop bypass) surgery, which re-routes blood from the femoral artery to the popliteal arteries above or below the knee.
- Femorotibial bypass surgery, which re-routes blood between the femoral artery and the tibial artery.

A substitute vessel or graft must be used in bypass surgeries to re-route the blood. The graft may be a healthy segment of the patient's own saphenous vein (autogenous graft), a vein that runs the entire length of the thigh. A synthetic graft may be used if the patient's saphenous vein is not healthy or long enough or if the vessel to be bypassed is a larger artery that cannot be replaced by a smaller vein.