

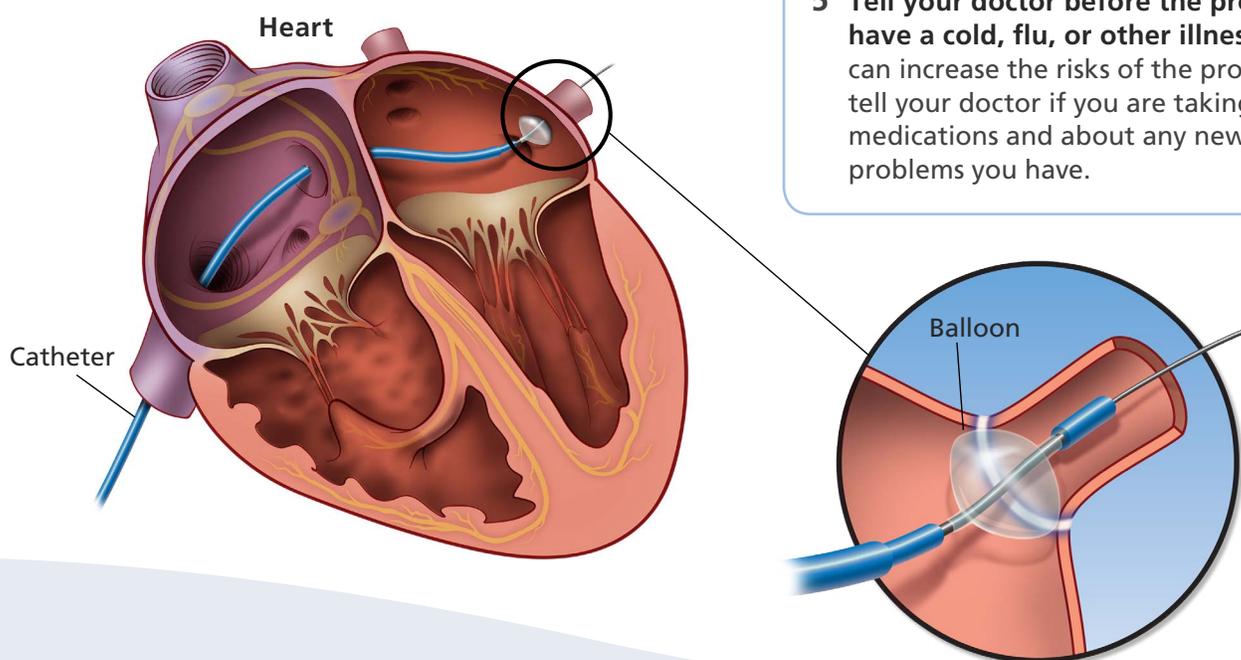
# Cryo Balloon Ablation

## What is cryo balloon ablation and why is it used?

Cryo [cry-oh] balloon ablation [ah-BLAY-shun] is a treatment for certain types of heart rhythm problems called arrhythmias (ah-RITH-mee-ahs).

Arrhythmias are often caused by cells in the heart muscle that send electrical signals when they should not. These signals can make the heart beat too fast or in an irregular way. Cryo ablation is used to restore a regular heart beat.

During cryo ablation, doctors use a very small balloon filled with a cold gas to freeze and destroy the cells that are causing the arrhythmia. (“Cryo” means cold. “Ablate” means to destroy.) The balloon is placed inside the heart through a blood vessel using a thin, flexible tube called a catheter.



## What do I need to do next?

- 1 Arrange for a ride home.** You will need to have a responsible adult take you home after your procedure.
- 2 Follow all of your doctor’s directions about medications and food.**
  - You may be asked to stop taking blood thinners or adjust your diabetes medications if you are taking them. Always check with your doctor before stopping any medications.
  - Your doctor or nurse may ask you not to eat or drink anything after midnight (12:00 AM) the night before the procedure.
- 3 Bring a list of all your current medications with you.** Write down everything you take, including over-the-counter drugs like cough syrup or allergy pills, inhalers, patches, herbs, and vitamin supplements. **Tell your doctor if you have allergies to any medications or dyes.**
- 4 If you use a CPAP machine to help you breathe,** bring it with you to the hospital on the day of your procedure.
- 5 Tell your doctor before the procedure if you have a cold, flu, or other illness.** Infections can increase the risks of the procedure. Also tell your doctor if you are taking any new medications and about any new medical problems you have.

## What can I expect during the procedure?

The procedure usually takes 3 to 5 hours.

- You will get medication through an IV to make you feel relaxed and drowsy. If you are awake, your doctor may give you directions during the procedure. A nurse will prepare the area where the catheter will be placed into a blood vessel, usually in the groin. You will get medication to numb that area.
- A sheath (a short plastic tube) will be placed into the blood vessel. You may feel some pressure at first. Then the balloon catheter will be put into the sheath and moved through your blood vessels to your heart.
- Depending on your type of heart rhythm problem, you might get general anesthesia and will sleep through the procedure. You will not feel the numbing or the catheter insertion.
- Your doctor will use special x-rays to watch the catheter as it moves through your body. When the balloon reaches the problem area in your heart, cold gas inside the balloon will be used to freeze the tissue and destroy it. You will not feel this. The catheter will be removed at the end of the procedure.

## What happens after?

The catheter is removed and pressure is applied to the site to help reduce any bleeding.

You will be moved to a recovery unit where nurses can monitor you.

You may have some minor soreness in your chest or tenderness or bruising at the catheter insertion site.

You will need to lie quietly for about 2 to 4 hours.

A nurse will make sure you're safe when you first get up. You may be asked to use a bedpan rather than getting up to use the toilet at first.

Some patients can go home at the end of the day. Other patients will need to stay overnight. Your doctor will decide when it's okay for you to leave the hospital.

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## What are the benefits, risks, possible complications, and alternative treatments?

The possible risks, benefits, complications, and alternatives to this procedure are different for each patient. Your doctor will talk with you about the benefits and risks for your unique situation. Be sure to ask any questions you might have.

Possible benefits	Risks and possible complications	Alternatives
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• It can lessen or stop an abnormal heart rhythm</li><li>• It can allow you to stop or reduce the amount of medication you take for a heart rhythm problem</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Injury to a nerve that helps you breathe; this often gets better with time</li><li>• Blood clots</li><li>• Possible need for a pacemaker</li><li>• Injury to the esophagus (the tube that food and liquid go down when you swallow); this is rare</li><li>• Narrowing or blockage in a vein that brings blood from the lungs to the heart; this is rare</li><li>• Bleeding around the heart that might require surgery</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Medication</li><li>• Radiofrequency ablation (this is similar to cryo balloon ablation, but uses heat instead of cold)</li></ul>

## What happens when I go home?

During the first 48 hours, you may:

- **Feel sore from several hours of lying still.** This will go away in a day or so.
- **Have bruises at the catheter site.** This should go away in a week or so.
- **Have a heartbeat that feels strange at times.** This is common while your heart muscle adjusts to the new heartbeat.

You will need to:

- **Watch for swelling or bleeding at the catheter site, shortness of breath, and swallowing problems.**
- **Tell your doctor if you feel very tired or have severe chest discomfort.** Also tell your doctor if your chest discomfort lasts more than a few days.
- **Avoid bending or squatting** and intense activity such as climbing stairs, running, or lifting anything over 10 pounds for 1 week.
- **Take short walks** of 5 to 10 minutes several times a day.
- **Use a stool softener or mild laxative** if you are constipated.
- **Care for the catheter site.** Don't take a bath, get in a hot tub, or go swimming pool for the first 5 days, or until the wound is closed. You may take a shower after 24 hours (1 day).
- **If the site is sealed with a special device,** ask your doctor about the device and what you should watch for.

After 48 hours:

- **You can go back to work when your doctor says it's okay.** This will depend on how you are doing and what kind of work you do.
- **Take all medications exactly as prescribed by your doctor, even after you feel better.** Go to all follow-up appointments so your doctor can check your heart.

### When to call your doctor or 911

Call your doctor if you have:

- Mild bleeding
- A hard lump at the insertion site
- Mild shortness of breath and swallowing problems

Call 911 if you have:

- Moderate or severe bleeding; apply pressure to the site
- Moderate or severe breathing problems

### Questions for my doctor

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