

SURGICOM PATIENT INFORMATION LEAFLET



AORTIC ANEURYSM REPAIR

GENERAL INFORMATION

An aortic aneurysm is a bulge in the aorta, the main blood vessel that comes from the heart. This aorta passes through the abdomen and gives off branches to various organs along the way and then divides into the vessels going to the legs. The cause of an aneurysm is atherosclerosis with weakening of the wall of the aorta.

COMMON SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

- Most aneurysms do not produce symptoms.
- There may be discomfort or pain in the middle of the abdomen.
- Severe pain in the back or on the side may be present.
- The aneurysm has a strong tendency to get larger.
- As it gets larger the chances of it rupturing get bigger.
- If it ruptures there is a good chance that it could kill you.

DIAGNOSIS

- An aneurysm can frequently be felt during a physical examination.
- It can often show up on an abdominal X-ray.
- An ultrasound is a convenient, painless and harmless way to clearly examine the aneurysm.
- A CT scan or angiogram are sometimes done to get more information.

TREATMENT

- At times it is justified keeping an eye on an aneurysm.
- At times surgical treatment is better.
- Your doctor has recommend surgical treatment for your aneurysm.

PRE-OPERATIVE PREPARATION

- You will be checked carefully for other possible problems, especially problems with other arteries in your body.
- Do not eat or drink anything for 6 hours before the operation.
- Your doctor will advise when he needs you to be admitted.
- Make sure your doctor knows what medicines you take, especially medicines which may affect blood clotting.

2.OPERATION

- This operation requires a general anaesthetic.
- During the operation the aneurysm will be opened and replaced by a tube graft made from synthetic material.
- If it is necessary you will receive a blood transfusion.
- The operation usually takes a few hours.

POST OPERATIVE CARE

- Most patients are nursed for a period in an intensive care unit.
- Your pain will be controlled either with an epidural catheter or other medicine.
- If you do well you will start taking liquids by mouth after a few days.
- When you are well enough you will be transferred to your normal hospital bed.

COMPLICATIONS

1. This is a serious operation and complications do sometimes occur. You must be aware of the following possible complications.
2. There is a significant chance that your sexual potency will be affected by this operation.
3. Damage to abdominal organs during the operation is possible but rare.
4. Occasionally this operation affects the blood supply to the large bowel or kidneys and this can lead to further complications.
5. An intra-abdominal bleed after the operation is possible. If this happens it will necessitate further surgery.
6. In rare instances the operation may cause problems with the blood supply to the legs, feet or toes. If this occurs amputations may be necessary.
7. Systemic complications like chest infections, stroke, heart attack, deep vein thrombosis or pulmonary embolism are possible.