

Glossary of Terms

anesthesiologist

The doctor responsible for monitoring your vital signs and general well being and administering the medications that affect consciousness before and during your surgery.

aneurysm

A bulge or weakness in the walls of a blood vessel.

angina

Chest pain - often associated with blockage of the arteries that serve the heart.

aorta

The large artery that carries oxygen-rich blood from the left ventricle of the heart to the rest of the body.

aortic valve

The valve that controls blood flow between the left ventricle of the heart and the aorta (as blood exits the heart).

arterial line

A tube inserted into an artery, e.g., in the leg or wrist.

atria

The upper (filling) chambers of the heart.

autologous

The patient's own blood.

bioprosthetic valve

Also known as a tissue valve, it comes from an animal (usually pig or cow) or a human (deceased) donor.

CABG

An acronym for Coronary Artery Bypass Graft surgery, which is the surgery that reroutes the blood supply to the heart by bypassing blocked arteries.

coronary arteriogram *

A medical procedure used to diagnose and treat some heart conditions. A long, thin, flexible tube called a catheter is put into a blood vessel in your arm, groin (upper thigh), or neck and threaded to your heart. Through the catheter, your doctor can do diagnostic tests and treatments on your heart.

* <http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health>

cardiopulmonary bypass

Equipment that works in place of heart and lungs during surgery to circulate blood to the body.

catheter

A thin flexible tube placed into the body.

chest tube

Drainage tube placed around the heart and lungs to drain blood or fluid.

cholesterol

Found in cell walls throughout the body; used to make hormones, bile acids, vitamin D and other substances.

chordae

Tendon-like cords which connect the edges of heart valves to the papillary muscle thereby restricting how far the valve leaflets can open or close.

coronary arteries

The large blood vessels that supply the heart with oxygen-rich blood.

Coumadin®

The commonly used trade name for the drug warfarin, an anti-coagulant (blood thinner) often prescribed to reduce the chances of stroke.

diabetes

A metabolic disease that prevents the body from producing insulin (necessary to break down glucose) and regulating glucose levels in the blood.

echocardiogram*

A painless test that uses sound waves to create moving pictures of your heart. The pictures show the size and shape of your heart. They also show how well your heart's chambers and valves are working.

endotracheal tube

A tube inserted into the lungs (via the mouth and throat) and attached to a respirator to supply oxygen when the lungs are unable to operate on their own.

endovascular

Within a blood vessel. Describes a type of surgery done through a blood vessel, rather than open surgery (cutting through the chest).

HDL *

High density lipoprotein (or “good” cholesterol) takes cholesterol from the tissues to the liver, which removes it from the body. A low level of HDL cholesterol increases your risk for heart disease.

intra-aortic balloon pump

A device placed in the aorta and used to temporarily reduce the workload on the heart and allow it to recover.

* <http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health>

IV

Abbreviation for intravenous - a catheter inserted into the veins used to dispense medications and fluids.

LDL *

Low density lipoprotein (or “bad” cholesterol) carries cholesterol to tissues, including the arteries. Most of the cholesterol in the blood is the LDL form. The higher the level of LDL cholesterol in the blood, the greater your risk for heart disease.

* <http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health>

leaflets

The small flaps on the valves of the heart which serve as “doors,” allowing or preventing the passage of blood.

mechanical valve

An artificial device implanted in the heart to take the place of a natural valve.

mitral valve

The valve between the left atrium and left ventricle.

monounsaturated fats

Fats that tend to be liquid at room temperature and can lower LDL (low density lipoprotein, or bad) cholesterol when used in place of saturated fats in the diet; good sources are olive, canola and peanut oils.

nasogastric tube

A tube inserted into the stomach (via the nose) to drain the stomach contents.

pacemaker

An electrical device, sometimes temporary and sometimes permanently implanted, with the purpose of regulating the heart beat.

pneumonia

The condition of having an infection inside the lungs.

polyunsaturated fats

Much the same as monounsaturated fats, as they can also lower LDL; good sources are corn, soybean and safflower oils; fish and flax.

pulmonic valve

The heart valve between the right ventricle and the blood vessels that lead to the lungs (where blood is pumped to pick up oxygen).

saturated fats

Fats that tend to be solid at room temperature and can contribute to elevated levels of LDL; taken mostly from animal sources.

stenosis

Narrowing or blockage of an artery or heart valve opening.

Swan-Ganz catheter (PA line)

A large and long intravenous catheter inserted through the neck used to monitor the blood pressure in the heart; also called a pulmonary artery (PA) line.

trans fat

Fats that are made during a process called hydrogenation, which turns a liquid oil into a solid or semi-solid fat at room temperature; these fats can increase LDL and decrease HDL; avoid foods with partially-hydrogenated or hydrogenated oils.

tricuspid valve

The heart valve between the right atrium and the right ventricle.

urinary catheter

A drainage tube inserted into the bladder to drain urine.

ventricle

A lower (pumping) chamber of the heart.

