What Can I Expect if I Have Endovascular Surgery to Repair My Aneurysm?

Before Surgery
About one week before surgery, you’ll go to preoperative testing. During this visit, you will have a physical, review health history, have blood work and meet with the anesthesia team. This visit may take two to three hours.

If you have a history of heart or breathing problems, we will arrange to have a cardiology evaluation with our complex aorta cardiac team or arrange a visit with one of our pulmonary colleagues. They will be asked to review your situation and make sure that you’re in the best shape you can be to have surgery.

Day of Surgery
On the day of your surgery, you’ll come to the hospital very early in the morning and be prepped for surgery. Intravenous lines and monitoring lines will be inserted into your arms, and you will be brought to the operating room (OR). Your family will be able to stay with you for some of the time during this preparation. When you go to the OR, your family will go to the waiting room. Someone will update your family throughout surgery. Your surgeon will update them at the end of the procedure. If your family member cannot be here, we will make sure that they are notified via telephone.

The time a person spends in surgery will vary greatly. Your surgeon can estimate how long it may take based on your situation. Many people who receive a fenestrated graft will spend one to three nights in the intensive care unit (ICU). If you require a lumbar drain, you will spend one to two nights in the ICU and then be moved to our step down unit for continued recovery. Most people are discharged within three to four days after surgery.

When discharged, many people go home, but some may require a stay at a rehabilitation facility. That decision isn’t made until after your surgery to see how your recovery is progressing.

After Surgery
If you go home after surgery, you’ll be asked to take it easy for a few weeks. Most people are encouraged to shower daily and move around as often as possible. You won’t be able to drive until you have stopped your narcotic pain medication.

Most people will feel run down for a few weeks. Remember, even though you don’t have big incisions, many changes have happened inside your body, and it will take you time to feel back to normal. Plan to be up and about each day with rest periods planned during the day.

We’ll see you a week after surgery to check your incisions. Then you’ll come back 30 days after surgery to have a CT scan and ultrasound to check your aneurysm repair.
Follow-up Care
Successful endovascular repair of any type requires a commitment to long-term follow up. CT scans check that your device is working well, and ultrasounds check that the blood flow to each of the branches is normal. In the first year following your procedure, you’ll see your surgeon and have a CT scan and ultrasound one month after surgery, six months after surgery, and one year after surgery. If there is concern about your repair, additional visits may be required. If everything progresses well, you’ll need a yearly CT scan, ultrasound and visit with your surgeon.