
Coronary Stents and Plavix

There are many questions you may have regarding coronary stents and the use of Plavix as a blood clot inhibitor. This is meant to provide you with basic information that will answer your questions.

Coronary stents are small metallic coils that are placed on the inside of the artery, so as to keep open the areas that are blocked. There are two main types of stents: bare metal stents and drug coated stents. These have shown to reduce the symptoms of heart disease, including angina. Which type of stent you receive depends on many different factors and will be determined by the doctor performing your Cardiac Catheterization.

Regardless of the type of stent you receive, after the procedure you will be placed on Plavix (Clopidogrel) and Aspirin. These medicines work at preventing blood clots from forming inside your stent. Your doctor may want you to take Plavix anywhere from one month to one year, depending on which stent you receive. Some people with complicated heart disease, heart attack or stroke may need to take Plavix even longer.

Studies have shown that, although infrequent, blood clots can form inside both types of stents within the first year after placement. Because of this, it is very important to take your Plavix as long as it is prescribed and to discuss it with your cardiologist first before stopping it prematurely. Stopping your Plavix too soon can cause clot formation within the stent, which could result in serious harm or death. It is also recommended that you notify your family physician and dentist that you are taking Plavix before having minor or major surgeries performed.