Intra-aortic Balloon Pump Therapy

What is a Balloon Pump?
- It is a device used to increase the blood to the heart.
- The balloon is placed in the aorta. The aorta is the artery leading away from the heart.
- The balloon inflates between heart contractions. This pushes blood through the arteries and supplies the heart muscle with more oxygen and blood.
- The balloon pump does not beat for the heart. The heart must still beat for itself.

When is it used?
- It is used when the heart receives too little oxygen, as in a heart attack.
- It is also used when the heart is too weak to pump blood on its own.

During the procedure
- The balloon is placed in a lab by a heart doctor. The patient will be sedated.
- The doctor will insert the deflated balloon through an artery in the leg.
- The balloon is advanced until it is just outside the heart.

While the balloon is in place
- The patient remains in bed with the head of the bed flat. This will keep the leg straight and allow the balloon to inflate and deflate as it should.
- The patient can resume eating while the balloon pump is in if it is okay with the doctor.
- It is not painful when the balloon inflates, but it is normal to feel some pain in the leg where the balloon is inserted.
- The patient should tell a nurse or doctor if he or she has chest pain or heaviness, or any numbness or pain in the leg.
- Sometimes the machine will sound alarms. These alarms alert the nurse to a problem with the machine or a change in the patient. The nurse will check both the machine and patient with any alarm.
**Removal of the Balloon**

- The balloon pump is used for short amounts of time.
- It is removed when the heart is able to pump enough blood on its own. This is most often after a few days, but may be longer.
- It is removed by a doctor in the ICU.

- After the balloon is removed, the patient has to stay in bed for a few hours so the nurse can watch for any bleeding.
- The doctor will decide when the patient can be out of bed.

**References**

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