

Work Sheet for Aortic Aneurysm (Answer Key)

What are the four sections of the aorta?

- The ascending aorta – coming up out of the left ventricle.
- The aortic arch – going above the heart and supplying blood to the arms and brain.
- The thoracic aorta – passing through the chest cavity.
- And finally the abdominal aorta, which carries blood to many organs in the abdomen and to the pelvic region and the lower body.

What percentage of people experiencing aortic aneurysms are male?

- 80%.

Where is the incision for this surgery made? What are the anatomical 'land marks' where the incision starts and stops?

- From just below the sternum, or breast bone, to just below the navel.

Why is heparin, a blood thinner or anti-clotting drug, given to the patient a few minutes before the clamps are put on the aorta?

- So that he doesn't develop blood clots in the arteries above or below the clamps during the surgery.

Why is the aorta clamped just above the iliac arteries before it is clamped near the renal arteries?

- To avoid embolisms, or blood clots, going down into the legs.

What is the 'cell saver' and what is it supposed to accomplish?

- The cell saver collects and cleans the blood removed during surgery so that it can be returned to the patient.

What is the graft used to repair the aneurysm made of?

- Knitted polyester fabric.

Why should the surgeon check for bleeding after suturing the aorta closed?

- Leaks can occur between the sutures, causing significant blood loss.

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