



# Clinton Out of Hospital After Heart Surgery

**Immediate Doctor's Visit Likely Saved Ex-President From Bigger Problems**

**By JOHN BERMAN and DAN CHILDS**

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Former President Bill Clinton left New York Presbyterian Hospital/Columbia this morning after [stent surgery on Thursday afternoon](#).

"President Bill Clinton was released from in excellent health," Clinton spokesman Douglas Band said in a statement issued this morning. "He looks forward in the days ahead to getting back to the work of his foundation, and to Haiti relief and recovery efforts."

Clinton's cardiologist Dr. Allan Schwartz said that in recent days Clinton "had been having episodes of [brief discomfort](#)" in his chest, which prompted him to schedule an appointment. It was during this appointment that the blockage was found.

"He saw his doctor, they did a procedure called an angiogram where they inject some dye into a vein, and they saw that there was a blockage in one of the arteries," explained ABC News Senior Health and Medical Editor Dr. Richard Besser on "[Good Morning America](#)". A [stent](#) is a device that is designed to prop open a narrowed artery to improve blood flow.

"He had two of those put in, so there must have been two areas of blockage in that artery," Besser said. "Those will stay in there for the rest of his life."

Dr. Mark Apfelbaum and Dr. Michael Collins were the surgeons who placed the stents Clinton's coronary artery during the procedure. The surgeons decided to place the stents in the native artery known as the left circumflex -- the artery that was originally blocked -- rather than into the bypass graft that had closed up. Putting the stent into the bypass graft would have been tricky, as such a procedure may have loosened clots that tend to accumulate in bypass grafts, possibly causing a heart attack.

The operation came [nearly six years after he had quadruple bypass surgery](#). Tests found one of the bypass grafts from his first operation was completely blocked. That's when doctors decided on the procedure.

The former president walked into the hospital on his own and even took part in a conference call on Haitian relief as he was wheeled into the operating room.

"Literally they were taking him into the room, hitting those double doors that open, he was on a conference call regarding Haiti and Doug Band had to say, 'Mr. President, that's it, we are taking your phone away from you,'" Clinton family friend Terry McAuliffe told George Stephanopoulos on "Good Morning America." this morning. "I mean if President Clinton had his way, George, while they were doing the operation he'd be working the phone,

raising money for Haiti and trying to get trucks and generators into Haiti. That is just who he is."

## Clinton's Healthy Lifestyle, Busy Schedule

By all accounts it was a smooth operation, and within two hours Clinton was back on his feet. But for many, questions remain over what brought Clinton's chest pain about in the first place. According to Schwartz, Clinton had been doing all the right things, including eating a healthful diet and exercising every day.

Clinton has also had a hectic schedule in recent months. In the last month alone, Clinton has traveled twice to the United Nations to coordinate Haitian relief, gone to Haiti twice to observe relief efforts, and traveled to Switzerland for the World Economic Forum in Davos.

"I just went overseas with him, I happened to go on his trip to Davos where he went over there to raise all this money for Haiti," McAuliffe said. "He never went to bed in four days. I mean we've got to get rested just to travel with President Clinton."

But though some of those traveling with Clinton say he appeared pale and tired, McAuliffe said he was in good health and good spirits.

"I have been fortunate to travel with him a lot; we went to Africa last year, and I asked him all the time, I said, 'How are you feeling?' McAuliffe said. "He said, 'Honestly I feel better now than any other time in my life.'"

Dr. Harlan Krumholz, professor of medicine at Yale University and a cardiologist at Yale-New Haven Hospital, told "Good Morning America's" Robin Roberts that Clinton's new lifestyle probably delayed the development of new heart problems following his 2004 bypass operation. Krumholz also said Clinton's reaction to his chest pain serves as a good example for others who live with heart disease.

"I think there's a lesson here for people who are listening and following this case," Krumholz said. "The thing is that heart disease is a chronic condition, and it really is important to pay attention to all these things. Prevention makes a difference, but we can't cure it."

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