

How to Care for Yourself After Groin Access Heart Catheterization

What are my care instructions right after my heart catheterization?

- If you were given medication for pain or sedation while in our care, avoid these activities for 24 hours:
 - Do not drive for 24 hours after the procedure and do not drive home from the hospital.
 - Do not drink alcohol.
 - Do not sign legal documents.
 - Do not operate machinery or use power tools.
- For your safety, have a family member, friend, or another adult stay with you for the next 24 hours.
- Start eating your normal diet.
- Drink at least 8 glasses of water or fluid in the next 24 hours (unless your doctor told you to restrict your fluid intake).

What are my activity instructions after my procedure?

Restrictions

- Do not push, pull, or lift more than 10 pounds for the next 7 days.
- Do not participate in activities involving a lot of strength and effort for 7 days. This includes most sports, such as jogging, golfing, playing tennis, and bowling.
- Do not strain while having a bowel movement. Instead, use soluble fiber (Metamucil®, Benefiber®, FiberCon®) and drink extra water to make it easier to pass your stool.

Activities

- You may climb stairs, but go slowly.

- For the first 7 days after your procedure, do only light activities (walking, climbing stairs, and regular activities of daily life are fine). After 1 week, you can return to your normal activity level.
- When coughing, sneezing, or straining, support your procedure site by putting gentle pressure on it with your hand. This helps prevent bleeding from the procedure site.

What can I expect after my heart catheterization?

It is normal to experience the following at your procedure site:

- Bruising (this may take 2-3 weeks to go away)
- A small lump or knot (about the size of a quarter) that should go away after 7-10 days
- Tenderness, discomfort, or pain at the procedure site which should get better over a few days

How do I care for my procedure site?

- You will leave with a bandage on your procedure site.
- You may shower 24 hours after your procedure. Follow these steps as you take your first shower:
 1. Remove the bandage.
 2. Shower and wash your procedure site with mild soap.
 - Use a freshly laundered wash cloth and towel each time you shower.
 3. Pat your skin dry and put a new bandage on your procedure site.
 - For the first 2 days after your procedure, keep the site covered with a Band-Aid® or bandage. After that, no bandage or dressing is needed unless there is clear drainage (fluid leaking from the procedure site).
- Do not use creams, lotions, powders, or ointment on the site until it heals.

- Do not soak in a bath or hot tub, or swim in a pool or lake, for 1 week after your procedure.

When do I need to get emergency care?

Call 911 immediately if you have any of the signs and symptoms listed below:

- Sudden chest pain
- Shortness of breath or trouble breathing
- Feeling light-headed, dizzy, or breaking out in a cold sweat
- Irregular heartbeats (heart palpitations)
- Nausea
- Severe itching anywhere on your body

Signs and symptoms of a stroke

Call 911 if you have any of these signs and symptoms:

- Sudden confusion, or trouble speaking or understanding others
- Sudden trouble seeing in one or both eyes
- Sudden numbness or weakness of the face, arm, or leg, usually on one side of the body
- Sudden trouble walking, dizziness, or loss of balance or coordination
- Sudden or severe headache with no known cause

Signs and symptoms of changes at your procedure site:

Call 911 if you have any of these signs and symptoms:

- Sudden or large amount of bleeding or swelling
 - If this happens, put firm pressure on the site, lie down, and call 911.
- Severe numbness or tingling in your leg
- Your leg becomes cold, is cool to the touch, or looks blue compared to your other leg

- Tightness, severe swelling, or a lump at your procedure site
- Unusual pain in your groin or leg

Do not try to drive yourself to the hospital. An ambulance will arrive as quickly as possible.

When should I call my doctor?

The following signs and symptoms need to be treated before they become an emergency. Call your doctor if you have any of the signs or symptoms listed below:

- Temperature higher than 100.5°F for more than 24 hours
- Bleeding, increased bruising, redness, swelling, increased pain, yellow or green drainage, or bad-smelling drainage near your procedure site
- A sudden painful lump at the procedure site
- Increased discomfort at the procedure site, or discomfort that is not relieved by over the-counter pain medication such as acetaminophen (Tylenol®)

What is the number to call my doctor or care team?

- **On the day of your procedure**, call (734) 936-7375 Monday through Friday from 8:00 am to 4:30 pm.
 - Ask to speak to the cardiac procedure unit charge nurse.
- **On the day after your procedure**, call (888) 287-1082 Monday through Friday from 8:00 am to 4:30pm.
 - Ask to speak to the cardiac procedure unit charge nurse.
- **Call (734) 936-6267 after 4:30 pm or on weekends or holidays.**
 - Ask the hospital operator to page the Interventional Cardiology Fellow on call. You will receive a call back from the fellow.

What type of follow up care will I receive?

You will get a phone call 24 hours after your procedure from a cardiac procedure unit nurse. You will have a post-operative visit in the clinic about 4 weeks after your procedure. If you did not set up an appointment for your return visit before you left the hospital, please call **(888) 287-1082** to schedule this visit.

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