

# How to Care for Yourself after Transcatheter Aortic Valve Replacement (TAVR)

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## **When do I need to seek emergency care?**

**Call 9-1-1 immediately if:**

You have any of the following **symptoms of stroke**:

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

If you have any of the symptoms listed below:

- Sudden onset of chest pain
- Shortness of breath
- If your legs feel numb, tingly, cold or look blue
- You believe you are experiencing a true emergency

## **When do I need to call my doctor?**

Call us if you develop any of the following signs and symptoms:

- Under the tongue temperature above 100.5 degrees Fahrenheit
- Bleeding, redness, swelling, red streaking, increased pain, or foul smelling drainage near the procedure site
- Increased swelling in your legs or ankles
- Weight gain of 2-3 pounds in one day or 5 pounds in a week
- Trouble urinating

- Nausea, vomiting or diarrhea
- Chills or excessive sweating
- A vague feeling that something is wrong

### **What is the number to call?**

- Call **(888) 287-1082** Monday through Friday from 8am to 5pm
  - Ask to speak to the TAVR Nurse if you have any of the signs or symptoms above.
- Call **(734) 936-6267** after 5pm or on weekends or holidays
  - Ask the hospital operator to page the Cardiac Surgery Resident on call.

### **What steps should I take to monitor my health at home?**

You will need to perform and record the following self-checks daily:

- Take your temperature each morning before eating or drinking and at any time you think you may have a fever. Keep a record of your daily temperature.
- Weigh yourself at the same time each morning after you urinate but before you eat breakfast. Use the same scale every day. Keep a record of your daily weight.
- Take your blood pressure and heart rate each morning. Keep a record of your daily blood pressure and heart rate readings.

### **What are my activity instructions?**

#### **Restrictions**

- **Do not** lift, push or pull any object over 10 pounds for 10 days after your procedure. As a reference, a gallon of milk weighs about 9 pounds.
- **Driving:**
  - Your doctor will discuss with you when you can drive again. You will receive specific instructions at the time of discharge (most

- people are restricted from driving for one-week post TAVR procedure).
- **Do not drive** if you are taking narcotic pain medication.
  - You can ride as a passenger in a car at any time, but wear your seatbelt.
- **Do not** return to work until you have seen your doctor at the first follow up clinic visit or until otherwise directed by your TAVR care team.

### **Activities**

- Walk every day (find an indoor setting during bad weather).
- You may climb stairs but you take them at a slow pace.
- Limit the number of times you take the stairs until you are feeling well.
- Divide your time and spread activities throughout your day. Do not try to do everything at once.
- Use your incentive spirometer at least 4 times a day (10 breaths each time) until you return for your clinic visit.

### **What are my diet instructions?**

- Continue with your normal diet after discharge. Although, your doctor may recommend that you follow a low fat, 2-gram salt diet after you go home.
- Avoid adding salt in cooking or at the table.
- Avoid canned, processed and frozen foods.
- Begin making changes to your diet when your appetite returns to normal.

### **How do I care for my procedure site?**

- Keep your procedure site clean and dry.
- **Do not** put any lotions, ointments, powders or anything else on your incisions.
- Check your procedure site daily for **signs of infection** including:
  - Increased redness

- Swelling
- Increased pain
- Foul smelling drainage
- If needed, place a dry gauze over your procedure site to protect clothing from rubbing or to dry sweat between skin folds.
- **Do not** soak in bathtub, hot tub or swim in a pool until your incision is completely healed.

**Follow these guidelines to care for your procedure site while bathing:**

- You may shower after returning home, but don't allow the shower spray to hit your procedure sites directly.
- Use mild soap and water and let the water run freely over your procedure sites.
- Do not scrub your procedure sites.
- Use a freshly laundered washcloth and towel with each shower.

**How will I manage my pain and comfort at home?**

- Most people experience soreness in the lower abdomen (stomach)/groin area and wrist (if an embolic protection device was used) where the incisions were made.
- Most people have mild discomfort that is relieved by taking acetaminophen (Tylenol®).
- You may leave the hospital with a prescription for pain medicine. If you are sore or uncomfortable, please take this medicine as directed.
- If your clothing rubs or irritates your incisions, you can cover the area with dry gauze held in place with medical tape.
- Take time to nap every day. Rest is an important part of your recovery.

**How do I handle my emotions after I get home?**

- It may take a while for you to feel like yourself again after surgery.

- People who have had surgery commonly experience mood swing, feel depressed or down after returning home.
- You may find yourself crying for no clear reason, or feeling more emotional or sentimental than normal.
- Even though you may feel drained emotionally, it is important you follow guidelines for good self-care. As you resume your normal activities, you should notice gradual improvement in your mood and outlook.
- If you find yourself still feeling unmotivated, unusually fatigued, weepy, angry, hopeless, or sad after 3 weeks, or if you have thoughts of hurting yourself or someone else, be sure to call the CVC Social Worker at (734) 232-1559 or your Primary Care Doctor (PCP) and make an appointment to talk about how you are feeling.
- If you have thoughts of hurting yourself call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at (800) 273-8255. This service is available 24 hours a day every day. Chat options are also available through their website e <https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org>

### **What are my medication instructions?**

- When you are discharged from the hospital you will receive a complete list of the medications you should take at home.
- Your medication list will include the following information:
  - Medication name(s)
  - Dose of the medication
  - Number of times to take the medication each day
  - The last time you took each medication
  - The next time that you should take each medication
- The prescriptions are sent electronically to your pharmacy on record.
- It is important to have your insurance cards with you to help speed up the filling of your prescriptions.
- Take your medicine exactly as your doctor prescribed.

- Do not take other medication without telling your doctor.
- Keep a current list of your medicines, dosages, and times to be taken in your wallet or purse.

### **What should I do for follow-up care?**

- You will be seen in the TAVR clinic about one month after you are discharged from the hospital. This appointment date and time will be listed on your discharge summary.
- You should schedule an appointment with your primary care physician (PCP) and primary heart doctor. These doctors will manage your medications long term and need to see you in person after your TAVR procedure.
- In the future, you will need to take antibiotics **before having dental cleanings or procedures**. The antibiotics help to prevent an infection, called endocarditis, from forming on your new heart valve. Please let your PCP and dentist know this so they can prescribe antibiotics for dental procedures.
- Be sure to talk with your dentist or doctor before having any medical or dental procedures.

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Author: Multidisciplinary TAVR Program Staff  
Reviewers: Mary Jo Boyle, DNP  
Bethany Lee-Lehner, BSN, RN

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