



How do I care for the incision?

- Do not cover the incisions, leave them open to air. If there is no drainage, then no Band-Aids® or dressings are needed.
- Do not apply any lotion or ointment unless directed.
- There may be a small amount of clear yellow or dark bloody drainage from any of the incisions, this is normal. A Band-Aid® or light dressing may be used for this. Please remove dressing as soon as there is no more drainage.
- Until the stitches are removed, wash the incision daily with soap and water and gently pat dry. You can take tub baths after the stitches are out and a shower when all tubes and IV's are removed.
- Steri-strips or special tapes placed over the incision should be left alone until they fall off or are removed at the follow-up appointment.
- If a chest tube stitch is still in place, it should be removed by your local doctor or home care nurse 5 days after the tube(s) are taken out.

Are there any physical restrictions for children?

Allow your child to play at their own pace. Children are good at limiting their own activity. Children can lay on their stomach or have “tummy time”.

- Follow these restrictions for **1 week after surgery**:
 - Do not soak incision in a bath tub.
 - In 1 week, your child may take a tub bath if all stitches have been removed. If stitches are removed any time after the first week they can bathe 2 days following stitch removal.
- Follow these restrictions for **2 weeks after discharge**:
 - Keep your child home from school, day care and other crowded areas such as stores and church.
 - If patient is of driving age they should not drive.
 - No swimming. After 2 weeks, they may swim in chlorinated water.

- Follow these restrictions for **6 weeks after discharge**:
 - No physical activity such as gym, contact sports, sledding, roller blading, skiing, bike riding, or using trampolines.
 - No lifting over 5 pounds.
 - Swim in chlorinated water only. After 6 weeks, they may swim in unchlorinated water (ocean, lake, pond).

Restrictions can vary for each patient. Talk with your doctor or nurse about your child's individual needs.

Are there any physical restrictions for adults?

Continue to walk every day. You may climb stairs as tolerated. Pace your activities and allow time to rest as needed.

- Follow these restrictions for **1 week after surgery**:
 - No swimming.
 - Do not soak incision in a bath tub.
 - After 1 week, you may take a tub bath if all stitches have been removed. If stitches are removed any time after the first week you can bathe 2 days following stitch removal.
- Follow these restrictions for **2 weeks after discharge**:
 - No swimming. After 2 weeks, you may swim in chlorinated water.
- Follow these restrictions for **4 weeks after discharge or until cleared by a physician**:
 - Do not drive until you are no longer taking narcotics and your reaction time is back to normal. You may ride in a car and wear a seatbelt.
 - Do not return to work.
 - Swim in chlorinated water only.
- Follow these restrictions for **6 weeks after discharge**:
 - After **6 weeks**, you may swim in unchlorinated water (ocean, lake, pond).

- No lifting over 10 pounds (approximate weight of a gallon of milk)
Restrictions can vary for each patient. Talk with your doctor or nurse about your individual needs.

Can children with heart disease receive immunizations?

Immunizations are given to infants and children to protect them from serious illnesses such as diphtheria, hepatitis, whooping cough, polio and others.

Immunizations before or after heart surgery:

Children who are having heart surgery should not receive routine immunizations 2 weeks before surgery and it is best to avoid routine immunizations for 6 weeks after heart surgery (this does not include Influenza, Synagis and Pneumococcal vaccines).

Influenza vaccine:

Children and adults with some heart problems are at increased risk for influenza. Influenza can cause life-threatening pneumonia. They should receive the influenza vaccine each year. Influenza most often occurs between October and April. It is best to give the shots during the months of September, October, or November.

Children 6 months to 12 years of age need two shots, unless they have had an influenza vaccine before. In this case, only one shot may be necessary.

Please discuss immunizations with your primary doctor or pediatrician.

Synagis and Pneumococcal vaccines:

Talk with your doctor or nurse about your individual needs.

Locations for immunizations:

Children and adults can get their immunizations at the doctor's office or the public health department where the shots are often given free of charge.

Can my child travel?

There are no reasons not to travel if your child has a congenital heart defect.

- Knowing where the closest major children's hospital is located may be helpful.
- Make sure that you travel with important phone numbers, including your Pediatric Cardiologist.
- Pack enough medication for a couple extra doses in case travel plans change at the last minute. If your child has a cyanotic (blue) heart defect, oxygen must **always** be used on airplane flights while in the air.
- Children with cyanotic heart defects should **never** fly in a non-pressurized plane.
- Take a recent letter from your cardiologist in case of an emergency.

When should I call my doctor?

- Temperature over 101.5 ° (F)
- Increased tiredness
- New onset of dry cough
- Change in appearance of incision
- Cloudy yellow drainage
- Increased redness or swelling
- Separation of incision edges
- Increased pain
- Vomiting or diarrhea

When should I schedule a follow-up appointment?

Pediatrician/Family Doctor:

- Newborns: within 2-3 days after discharge. Please call the office to schedule an appointment.
- All other children and adults: as needed.

If being followed by a cardiologist at Michigan Congenital Heart Center:

- Pediatric Cardiac Surgery Clinic:
 - 2 weeks after discharge with the Nurse Practitioner. Appointment will be scheduled for you before discharge.
 - Arrive 30 minutes early for a chest x-ray.
- Pediatric Cardiology Clinic:
 - 4-6 weeks after discharge with Cardiologist. Appointment will be scheduled for you before discharge.

If being followed by a referring or outside cardiologist (non-U of M cardiologist)

- Please call to schedule a follow-up appointment with your referring cardiologist to be seen 1-2 weeks after discharge. We are able to assist with this if needed.

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