

How to Care for Yourself after Radial Access Heart Catheterization

What are my care instructions right after my heart catheterization?

- If you have received medication for pain or sedation while under our care, you **should not** do the following activities for **24 hours**:
 - Drive
 - Operate machinery
 - Use power tools
 - Drink alcohol
 - Sign any legal document (s)
 - **Do not** take blood pressures on your affected arm for 24 hours.
- For your safety, have a family member, friend or another adult stay with you for the next 24 hours.
- Keep your wrist straight for the next 24 hours.
- Resume your usual diet.
- Drink at least (8) glasses of water or fluid for the next 24 hours **unless** you have been told to restrict your fluid intake.

What are my activity instructions after the procedure?

- **Do not** use your affected arm to lift, push, or pull more than 2-3 pounds for the next 7 days.
- **Do not** participate in strenuous activities for 4 days after your procedure. This includes most sports including jogging, golfing, playing tennis, and bowling.

What can I expect after having a heart catheterization?

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

- A small amount of bleeding from the site for 48 hours after the procedure.
- Bruising (may take 2-3 weeks to go away)
- Slight numbness or tingling in your hand after the procedure that should improve over several hours. There should not be any significant numbness or tingling in your hand.
- Mild swelling at the catheter insertion site.
- Tenderness, discomfort or pain at the insertion site which should improve over a few days.

How do I care for my procedure site?

- Keep the site clean and dry (when not cleansing).
- Remove the bandage over the site and shower after 24 hours then wash your procedure site daily with soap and water.
- After cleansing use a Band-Aid or similar bandage on the site for the first 1-2 days and then leave it uncovered.
- **Do not** soak the affected wrist in water (washing dishes by hand, baths, swimming, hot tubs) for the first 7 days.
- **Do not** use creams, lotions, powders, or ointment on the site until it heals.

When do I need to seek emergency care?

Call 9-1-1 immediately if you have any of the following signs and symptoms:

- 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
- Itching

Signs and symptoms of stroke:

- Sudden confusion or trouble speaking or understanding others
- Sudden trouble seeing in 1 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:

- Sudden or large amount of bleeding or swelling at the catheter insertion site
 - Apply firm pressure to your wrist, sit down and call 911. **Do not** drive yourself to the hospital.
- Significant numbness or tingling in your hand, especially if it is constant or gets worse
- Hand becomes cold or changes color
- Hand becomes more painful
- You cannot feel the pulse in your wrist
- Tightness, significant swelling, or a lump at the catheter insertion site.
 - If the swelling suddenly increases in size, apply pressure to the site and call 911. **Do not** drive yourself to the hospital.

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 for more than 24 hours.
- Bleeding, increased bruising, redness, swelling increased pain, yellow or green drainage or foul smelling drainage near your procedure site
- Sudden painful lump at the puncture site.

- Discomfort at the procedure site that increases or is not relieved by over-the-counter pain medicines such as acetaminophen (Tylenol®).

What is the number to call?

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

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