

PAD TREATMENT: RECOVERING FROM ATHERECTOMY

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When you have peripheral artery disease, or PAD, you may require atherectomy to restore blood flow to your neck, arms, or legs, and reduce both the symptoms and the complications of PAD. Normally, you can be released from the hospital on the day of your atherectomy, or the next day, to begin your recovery at home.

At home, follow your discharge instructions carefully. Your discharge instructions will give you and your loved ones the information you need to continue a healthy recovery and avoid complications.

Get plenty of rest. Your body needs to heal and recover.

Do not lift anything greater than 10 pounds for the next day or two.

If instructed, drink plenty of fluids.

And check your incision site daily for signs of infection. Look for increased swelling around the incision area; redness, tenderness, soreness; warmth around the area; and an increase in your temperature or fever-like symptoms. If you do notice signs of infection, contact your healthcare provider immediately.

Some bruising around the incision area is normal and should go away in the next few weeks. If your incision starts to bleed, lie down, apply pressure to the area and call 911.

Your discharge plan will include a list of the medications you need to take as you recover, including pain medication. Make sure you understand this list before you leave the hospital. Some medications may be new to you. You may need to take some of these medications for the next several weeks or months, or you may need to take them for the rest of your life.

Some medications may interact with certain vitamins and supplements. Be honest about all of the medications you take. And before starting any new medications, including vitamins and supplements, talk to your healthcare provider.

It is a good idea to fill all of your prescriptions at one pharmacy; this way, the pharmacist will have a complete list of your medications on file and can alert you to any possible drug interactions.

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To make sure your medications work correctly, take them exactly as prescribed by your healthcare provider. This includes taking your medications at the same time each day. Do not miss a dose. It may help you to develop a system to keep track of all your medications, especially if you take more than one kind.

As you recover, you may be anxious to get back to doing your normal activities. Talk to your healthcare provider about when you can start being active again and when you can return to work.

Walking is a healthy activity that many people can do as they recover. Begin slowly, and gradually increase the length and intensity of your walks. Walking can get the blood flowing, reduce your symptoms of PAD and improve your overall health.

Even though your atherectomy has reduced a blockage and increased blood flow to your peripheral arteries, you are still at risk for developing future blockages. If you haven't already done so, talk to your healthcare provider about healthy lifestyle changes you can make to prevent future blood vessel damage.

Do not smoke – ever. If you smoked before, you do not anymore. And stay away from secondhand smoke.

Get regular exercise. Make it a part of your day. Your healthcare provider may recommend you attend a cardiac rehabilitation program. There you can be monitored while exercising and also get the emotional support you may need.

Make healthy food choices to improve your health. And take your medications as directed.

Atherectomy can relieve many of the symptoms of PAD including pain, and help prevent long-term complications. Follow your healthcare provider's instructions as you recover so you can get back to enjoying life again, as a healthier you.