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# Discharge Instructions for Infective Endocarditis (IE)

You have been diagnosed with infective endocarditis (IE). This is an infection of the lining of the heart or of the heart valves. It happens when bacteria or other germs enter the bloodstream and go to the heart. The germs then cause infection in the heart. The germs can enter your bloodstream in a number of ways. It may happen during a dental procedure. It can happen through a cut. Or the germs can come from an infection elsewhere in the body. Your infection was treated in the hospital with strong antibiotics or other medicines through an IV (intravenous) line. This is a very serious infection and can be life-threatening if not properly managed and cared for.

## At home

- You may need to continue IV therapy for up to 6 weeks at home. A long-term IV line is often put in before you leave the hospital. You will be given more instructions before you leave the hospital. Make sure to ask any questions you have. Your healthcare team will determine how long you should be on antibiotics (or other medicines) and how often you should have follow-up testing.
- Take the antibiotics until they are all gone. Take them even if you feel better. They treat the infection and prevent it from returning.
- Don't drive until your healthcare provider says it's OK.
- Take good care of your teeth and mouth. Brush your teeth after meals. Floss as directed.
- Visit your dentist every 6 months. Dental infection is a risk factor for bacterial endocarditis. See your dentist immediately if you have a toothache or abscess.
- You might need to take an antibiotic before dental visits. Ask your healthcare provider for more information.
- Tell your healthcare provider about all infections you have, even small ones.
- Take good care of yourself. Get regular exercise and eat a healthy diet. Ask your healthcare provider for help as needed.
- Stop smoking.
- If you use IV drugs, stop using them right away and tell your provider.
- Be careful to get correct treatment of any open cuts that develop.

## Follow-up care

Make a follow-up appointment as directed. You will need to follow up with an infectious disease doctor as well as a cardiologist and possibly a heart surgeon.

## When to call your healthcare provider

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Call your healthcare provider right away if you have any of the following:

- Fever of 100.4°F (38.0°C) or higher, or as directed by your provider
- Sweats
- Bloody urine
- Return of symptoms such as loss of appetite, weight loss, paleness, headache, or weakness
- Lightheadedness that comes back again and again
- Spots on your fingernails, fingertips, whites of the eyes, or other parts of your skin

## **Call 911**

Call 911 if you have:

- Chest pain or shortness of breath
- Severe belly (abdominal) or side pain
- Fainting
- Fluttering heartbeat (palpitations)
- Symptoms of a stroke, such as trouble speaking or the inability to move one side of your body or your face