
Discharge Instructions for Cardiac Catheterization

Cardiac catheterization is an invasive procedure to look for certain heart problems. These problems may affect the heart's chambers, valves, and blood vessels. A thin, flexible tube (catheter) is put in a blood vessel in your groin or arm. The catheter is moved to the heart. The healthcare provider can look at the blood flow, blood pressure, and oxygen. They can inject contrast fluid into your blood. This flows to your heart. The provider can then take X-rays pictures of your heart.

Coronary angiography is often done as part of a cardiac cath. This looks for blocked areas in the arteries that send blood to the heart. If a blockage is found, your provider may try to open up the artery. They may put a stent in place. Your provider will talk with you about the results of your procedure. Ask any questions you have before you leave. This sheet will help you take care of yourself at home.

Home care

- Have a responsible adult drive you home after your procedure.
- Don't drive or make any important decisions for at least 24 hours after getting any type of sedation or anesthesia.
- Drink 6 to 8 glasses of water over the next 24 hours. This is to help flush the contrast dye out of your body. Call your healthcare team if your urine has any change in color.
- Take your temperature each day for 3 to 5 days. If you feel cold and clammy or start sweating, take your temperature right away. Call your healthcare team.
- Do only light and easy activities for the next 2 to 3 days. Ask for help with chores and errands while you recover. Have someone drive you to your appointments.
- Don't lift anything heavy until your healthcare team says it's safe.
- Ask your healthcare team when you can expect to return to work. Unless your job involves lifting, you may be able to return to your normal activities within 2 days.
- Take your medicines as directed. Don't skip doses.
- Check your incisions every day for signs of infection. These include redness, swelling, and fluid leaking. It's normal to have a small bruise or bump where the catheter was put in. A bruise that's getting larger is not normal. Tell your healthcare team about this. Call your healthcare team if you see blood forming in the incision. Go to the emergency room if you have uncontrolled bleeding from the artery site. This is even more important if you take medicines that make it hard for your blood to clot. These include aspirin, clopidogrel, warfarin, apixaban, and rivaroxaban.
- Eat a healthy diet. Make sure it's low in fat, salt, and cholesterol. Ask your healthcare team for diet information.
- Stop smoking. Sign up for a quit-smoking program. Or ask your healthcare team for help.

- Exercise as your healthcare team tells you to. Your healthcare team may advise you to start a cardiac rehab program. Cardiac rehab is an exercise program where trained healthcare staff watch your progress and stress on your heart while you exercise. Ask your team how to enroll.
- Don't swim or take baths until your healthcare team says it's OK. You can shower the day after the procedure. Keep the site clean and dry. This keeps the incision from getting wet and infected until the skin and artery can heal.
- Follow all other after-care instructions from your team.

Follow-up care

- Make a follow-up appointment as advised. It's common to have a follow-up appointment 2 to 4 weeks after an angioplasty or coronary stent procedure.
- Make a yearly appointment. This is to make sure you're still doing well and not having any new symptoms.
- Don't wait for a follow-up appointment if your medicines aren't working or you're having heart-related symptoms. Call your healthcare provider.

When to get medical care

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

- Severe or increasing pain, numbness, coldness, or a bluish color in the leg or arm that held the catheter
- Fever of 100.4° F (38°C) or higher, or as advised by your healthcare provider
- Signs of infection at the incision site. These include redness, swelling, drainage, or warmth.
- Bleeding, bruising, or a lot of swelling where the catheter was inserted
- Blood in your urine
- Black or tarry stools
- Any unusual bleeding
- Irregular, very slow, or fast heartbeat
- Dizziness

Call 911

Call 911 if you have any of these:

- Chest pain
- Shortness of breath
- Sudden numbness or weakness in arms, legs, or face, or trouble speaking

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- The puncture site swells up very fast
 - Bleeding from the puncture site that doesn't slow down with firm pressure