

# Cardiac Catheterization: Returning Home

After a cardiac catheterization, you may be sore. And that's normal. For a few days, you may have swelling, bruising, or a small lump around the site where the catheter went into your body.

It's important to be careful with activity. This is to help heal the area where the catheter went in. If your doctor says it's okay, you may be able to do easy things around the house, such as light housework or cooking.

But don't lift anything heavy, and don't do any hard exercise until your doctor says it's okay. This may be for a couple of days or for several days. Make sure that you understand your doctor's instructions.

Easy walking is probably okay if your doctor allows it. You can take a shower 24 to 48 hours after the procedure. But don't soak the site or take a bath for 1 week or until your doctor says it's okay.

It may seem like a lot to do and remember, but don't worry. Before you go home, you'll meet with the staff to go through your care plan. The plan will include information about checkups, specialist care, any ongoing tests you may need, and who to call if there's a problem. This is a great time to ask questions.

Your medicines may change too, so be sure you understand what they are and how to take them. Your plan will also include having a heart-healthy lifestyle, including eating healthy, being active, and not smoking.

This will give you the best chance for a longer, healthier life. After going home, be sure that you follow any instructions about diet or activity and take your medicines as prescribed.

You'll also get directions on how to care for the site where the catheter was put in. Watch for a lump that's getting bigger under the site. And watch for bleeding from that area.

A small amount of blood on the bandage can be normal. But call your doctor if bright red blood soaks through the bandage. Call your doctor if you have problems such as new or worse pain or bleeding, or if you vomit and can't keep fluids down.

And call if your leg, arm, or hand is painful, looks blue, or feels cold, numb, or tingly. Also call your doctor if you see signs of infection, such as increased pain, swelling, warmth, or redness; or drainage from the area.

Get emergency help right away if you pass out, have severe trouble breathing, have sudden chest pain and shortness of breath, or cough up blood. You know yourself best, so call your doctor if you have any questions.

If you're a little nervous right now, that's okay. Recovery and healing take time.