



First Days of Recovery After Heart Surgery



Overview

When your heart surgery ends, your recovery journey begins. Let's see what you can expect for the next few days.

ICU

First, we take you to the intensive care unit. We say "ICU." You'll still be asleep from the anesthesia. And, you'll have a breathing tube connected to a machine that breathes for you. We closely monitor your vital signs. We make sure your IVs and drains are clear and working. You'll have a catheter in your bladder.

Waking up

Within a few hours after surgery, most patients are awake and breathing on their own. After we take out your breathing tube, you'll do breathing exercises to keep your lungs clear. We ask you to breathe deeply and to cough frequently. When it's safe, we move you to a more private room.

Walking

Soon, we'll get you up and have you do some walking. This keeps your muscles strong. It also prevents blood clots in your legs.

Watching you closely

Over the next few days, we keep watching you closely. We may take x-rays and do other tests. We'll have you walk around the halls. Gradually, we'll begin to take out your drainage tubes. And we take out your urinary catheter so you can pee on your own. It may take a few more days for you to have a bowel movement.

Conclusion

Your doctor will decide when it's time for you to go home. How long you stay depends on your surgery and how quickly you are healing. Follow your care plan for a safe recovery.