

to the operating suite (see [Surgical Procedures, Chapter 20](#)). After all of the equipment and procedures have been explained, it is important to talk about “getting well” and going home.

Provide Postoperative Care

Immediate postoperative care is usually provided by specially trained nurses in ICUs. Many of the procedures, such as arterial pressure and central venous pressure (CVP) monitoring, and the observations related to vital functions require advanced educational training (readers should refer to critical care texts for further information). However, nurses caring for the child before surgery and during the convalescent period need to be familiar with the major principles of care. Selected complications that may occur postoperatively are described in [Box 23-7](#).

Box 23-7

Selected Complications After Cardiac Surgery and Treatment Approaches

Cardiac

Heart failure: Digoxin, diuretics

Low cardiac output: Intravenous (IV) inotropes

Dysrhythmias: Identification, drug treatment, possible pacing, cardioversion

Tamponade (blood or fluid in the pericardial space constricting the heart): Prompt removal of fluid by pericardiocentesis

Respiratory

Atelectasis: Chest physical therapy, coughing, deep breathing, ambulation

Pulmonary edema: Diuretics

Pleural effusions: Diuretics, possible chest tube drainage