

- Prevention of fluid and sodium overload
- Decreased cardiac demands
- Improved oxygenation
- Reduced respiratory distress

Plan for Discharge and Home Care

Ideally, discharge planning begins on admission for cardiac surgery and includes an assessment of the parents' adjustment to the child's altered state of health. Neonates need additional screening tests (e.g., newborn metabolic screen and hearing tests) and may need immunizations, as well as a car seat test before discharge ([American Academy of Pediatrics, 2012](#)). The family will need both verbal and written instructions on medication, nutrition, activity restrictions, return to school, wound care, and signs and symptoms of infection or complications (see [Family-Centered Care](#) box). Referrals to community agencies may be warranted to assist parents in the transition from the hospital to home and to reinforce the teaching.

Family-Centered Care

Topics to Include in Discharge Teaching After Cardiac Surgery

- Medication teaching
- Activity restrictions
- Diet and nutrition
- Wound care (including dressings, if any; suture removal; bathing)
- Bacterial (infective) endocarditis prophylaxis (see [Box 23-9](#))
- Follow-up appointments (cardiologist, primary care provider)
- Community agencies as needed (visiting nurse service, early