Moving Your Child After Cardiac (Heart) Surgery

Your child had heart surgery in which an incision (or cut) was made along the front of the chest (sternotomy). Here are important precautions (safety measures) to know while your child is moving, being held, or lifted.
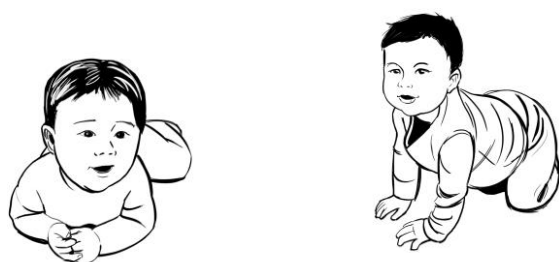
Infants and Toddlers

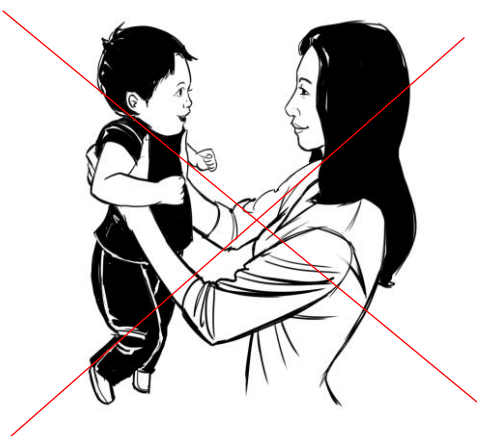**8 Weeks after surgery (end date):** _____

YES

No limitations for moving arms. Your child can move their arms as much as they are able to.

YES

No restrictions for tummy-time, which includes weight bearing activities such as crawling, propping, and creeping, as tolerated.

NO

DO NOT lift your child from under the arms to pick them up or pull them to standing for 8 weeks (or as decided by their medical team)

YES

Lift your child by supporting their back and bottom.

Approved by PFE 11/02/21

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Children, Teenagers, and Young Adults

8 Weeks after surgery (end date): _____

3 Months after surgery (end date): _____

✅ DO:	❌ DO NOT:
✓ **Allow them to use their arms as much as they are able to**	∅ **Lift anything that weighs more than 5-8 pounds for 8 weeks**
✓ **Encourage your child perform activities to their tolerance**	∅ **Wear a backpack for 8 weeks**
✓ **Have your child "self-hug" if they need to cough or sneeze**	∅ **Allow your child to hang from their arms for 8 weeks**
✓ **Follow the "Keep Your Move in the Tube" pictures so you know how to safely move for 8 weeks**	∅ **Lift your child from under their arms**
	∅ **Pull your child to standing for 8 weeks**
	∅ **Allow your child to participate in Physical Education (PE) activities at school for 8 weeks**
	∅ **Play contact sports for 3 months**

Who do I call if my child needs help?

- Please follow the information in your discharge instructions.Your clinics will be listed with phone numbers to call if you need help.

- Notes: _____

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Keep Your Move in the Tube™
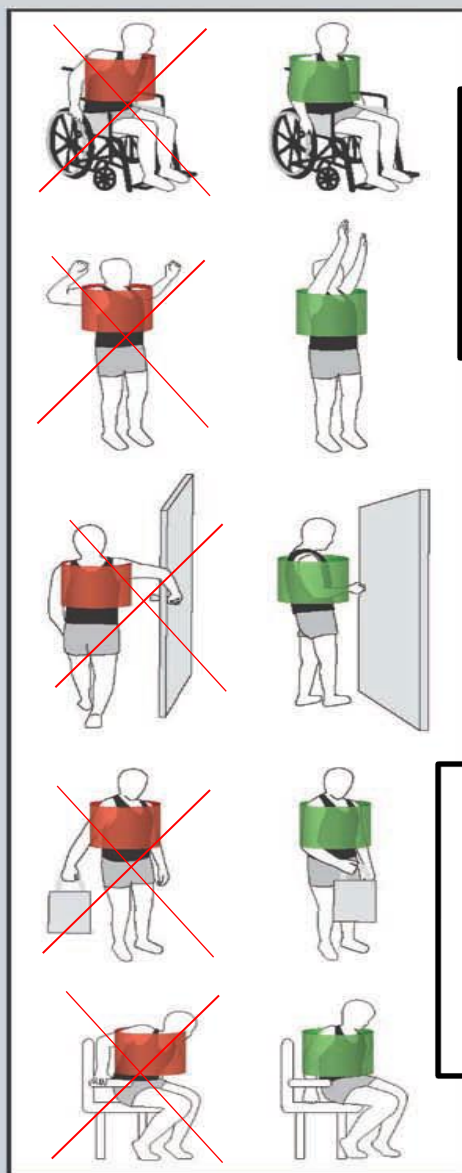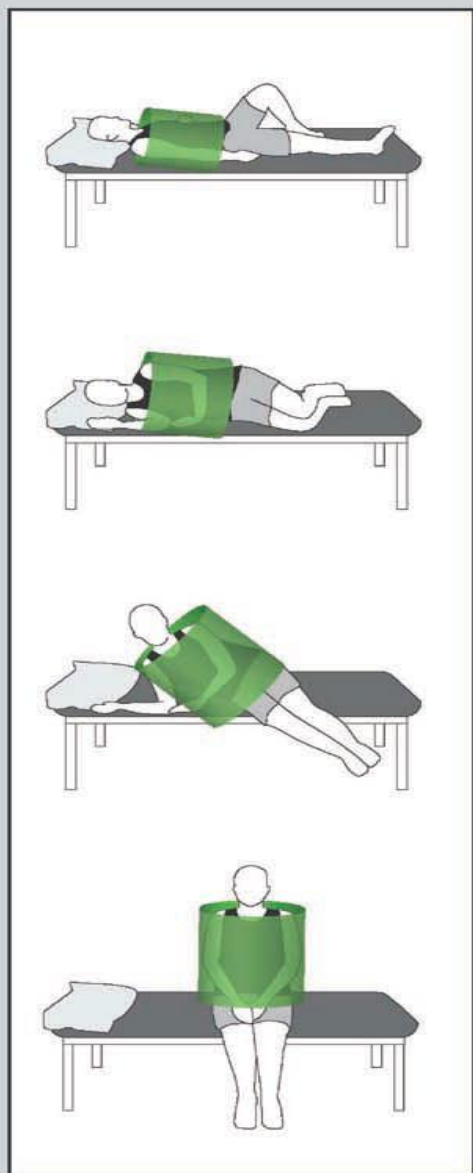
Keep movement in pain-free ranges

Keep your upper arms close to your body while doing activities

Source: Baylor University Medical

References Available Upon Request
Illustrations courtesy of Eric Yamamoto

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