

Discharge Instructions for Cardioversion



Your healthcare provider did a procedure called cardioversion. It uses a controlled electric shock or a medicine to briefly stop all electrical activity in your heart. This helped restore your heart's normal rhythm. Here are some instructions to follow while you recover.

Home care

- Before cardioversion, you will typically be given sedation. So you won't be able to drive home. You will need a ride. Wait at least 24 hours before driving a car or operating heavy machinery after getting sedating medicines.
- The skin on your chest may be irritated or feel like it's sunburned. Your healthcare provider may prescribe a soothing lotion or medicine to ease this discomfort. These minor symptoms will go away in a few days.
- Cardioversion requires that you take a blood-thinner medicine for at least 4 weeks after the procedure. This is to prevent a delayed risk for stroke when treating atrial fibrillation or atrial flutter. Be sure you discuss which medicine you are taking to prevent stroke. Ask if you need to have your medicine levels checked and when. Also ask if you can stop taking the medicine in the future or if you need to take it for life. Some blood-thinning medicines such as warfarin need to have the dose adjusted. They can interact with other medicines or foods. Your healthcare team will give you full instructions on what to watch out for. Report bleeding or symptoms of stroke right away to your healthcare team and seek emergency medical attention.
- Learn to take your own pulse. Keep a record of your results. Ask your healthcare provider when you should seek emergency medical attention. They will tell you which pulse rate reading is dangerous.
- If you were prescribed heart rhythm medicine, take it as instructed by your healthcare provider. These medicines may help prevent your abnormal heart rhythm happening again. You may need another cardioversion if the abnormal heart rhythm returns. After the procedure, your healthcare provider will tell you if the treatment worked or if you will need further treatments or medicine.

Follow-up care

Make a follow-up appointment, or as advised.

When to call your healthcare provider

Call your healthcare provider right away if you:

- Feel faint, dizzy, or lightheaded
- Have chest pain with increased activity
- Have irregular heartbeat or fast pulse
- Have bleeding issues from blood-thinning medicines

Call 911

Call 911 right away if you have:

- Chest pain

- Shortness of breath
- Loss of vision, speech, or strength or coordination in any body part

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