

## After Minimally Invasive Heart Surgery: At Home



You will need at least 4 to 6 weeks of healing before you can go back to your normal routine. While you are healing, follow your doctor's advice. Call your healthcare team if you have questions. Take all your medicines as prescribed.

### Follow-up visits

Follow-up visits with your healthcare team help make sure that you're healing well. To check your healing, you may have tests. These may include chest X-rays, echocardiograms to show the movement of your heart muscle, and electrocardiograms (ECGs) to show if there are any changes in your heart's rhythm. If you are taking medicines, you may have blood tests to check your medicine levels.



### Incision care

Your incisions may be bruised, itchy, numb, or sore for the first week. If strips of tape were used to close an incision, your healthcare team will tell you when you can wet and remove them. It's often in about a week. When you shower, gently wash your incisions with warm (not hot) water and soap. Don't soak in bath tubs, hot tubs, or go in a swimming pool until your doctor says it's OK. This is because they affect your blood flow. To help prevent infection, don't use skin lotions, ointments, or other skin products around your incisions, unless your provider tells you to.

### When to call your healthcare provider

Call your healthcare provider if you have any of these:

- Fever of 100.4°F (38°C) or higher, or as directed by your healthcare team, for more than a day
- Chills or sweating for more than a day

- A cold or infection
- No bowel movement for more than 2 days
- Weight gain of more than 2 pounds in 1 day, or 5 pounds in 1 week
- An incision that swells, oozes, smells bad, or becomes red or sore

## Call 911

Call 911 if any of the these occur:

- New or unusual chest pain
- New or unusual difficulty breathing
- Feeling faint or lightheaded, or passing out
- Your pulse (heartbeat) is fast, slow, or irregular. This means it has extra beats or is skipping beats.

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