



## The Digital Human Body of Knowledge

### - Health Variant -

Strategy  
Co-Design  
Corpus  
Operating Model



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## COMMON QUESTIONS ABOUT LEAVING HOSPITAL (incl. DISCHARGE)

Note: This is a working draft and there are duplicates that demonstrate different ways questions might be asked and answered.

I'm not ready to go home or want to leave hospital early	Can be emotional or practical concerns
Can I stay in hospital if I don't feel ready to go home	You may feel like you are not ready to go home when your doctor tells you it is time. Perhaps you do not feel strong enough – mentally or physically. Speak to your doctor or the hospital social worker about your concerns. There are ways the hospital can support you in going home so don't hesitate to speak about your concerns.
Why can't I leave hospital now, I feel okay	You might find you want to leave hospital before your doctor says you are ready. It is your choice to refuse treatment at any time and go home whenever you wish. However, some care can only be safely given to you in the hospital. Your doctor will talk to you about this. If possible, they will suggest ways you can get the support you need to go home early.
<b>Follow-On Interactions with Health System</b>	
Will I need to do any more tests when I get home	When you leave hospital, you will be given a number of follow-up medical appointments to check how you are recovering. You will be asked to do more tests at these appointments if they are needed.
Who do I call if I'm having problems	When you leave hospital, you will be given a number of follow-up medical appointments where you will be able to discuss any concerns you are having. I can show you how to do a telehealth call with your doctor if you can't wait until your next appointment.
Will I need to see my regular doctor when I get home	Yes, the hospital will make an appointment with your regular doctor for you before you leave. Your doctor will check on your recovery, arrange immunisations against the flu, book any regular blood tests and help you with advice on lifestyle change. Don't forget, if you have trouble getting to the doctor, I can show you how to talk to them using telehealth.
I'm worried about getting the flu	Heart patients have to be careful with the flu and other illnesses. Your regular doctor will arrange all of the shots you need and any special ones for going overseas if you travel.
I don't know who I would call if I have a problem after I get home	You will be given a list of people and services you can call on at home for medical and emotional support if you need them.
Who can help me manage stress	You can manage stress by meditation, stretching and slow deep breathing. Some heart patients find yoga helpful. Cutting back caffeine drinks can also help. If you need professional help a psychologist can help with exercises called guided imagery and deep relaxation.
Who can help me stop smoking	Your doctor can give you advice on stopping smoking. Your pharmacist can help with patches and other things that can help you stop smoking. Stopping smoking is one of the most important things you can do for your recovery so make sure you get help straight away.
Who can help me with breathing with breathing exercises	Your exercise physiologist will show you breathing exercises before you leave hospital to keep your lungs clear. If you haven't been shown or still aren't sure what to do I can help. Would you like me to show you a short video on your breathing exercises.

When should I call my doctor	You should call your doctor if you notice any of the following which might be signs of heart problems. You gain more than 3 pounds in a day or more than 5 pounds in a week. You have chills, sweating or a fever over 100 degrees F for more than a day. Your heart seems to be beating fast or slow or skipping beats. You have shortness of breath while resting. You have unexplained bruising or bleeding. You have pain in your chest or shoulder that gets worse with deep breathing or coughing. You have swelling, redness, oozing or tenderness near your surgical wounds.
Who can help me with exercise activities	Your exercise physiologist can help you with exercise activities.
Who can help me with work activities	Your occupational therapist can help you with work activities. Larger employers often have their own occupational therapists who can help you return to work.
Who can help me with family problems	Your social worker can help you with family problems related to your heart surgery and going home. {procedural localisation}
Who can help me with finances	Your social worker can provide you with general advice on finances after your heart surgery. You should talk to your financial planner if you are thinking about changing the work you do or stopping work altogether.
Who can help me with healthy eating	Your dietitian or nutritionist can give you advice on healthy foods to eat and how to cook them. They can also give you advice on shopping for healthy groceries, healthy dining out options and healthy take-out. To get you started would you like me to show you a short video on healthy eating?
Who can help me with my medications	Your pharmacist can help you with advice on your medications. They can also discuss ways of managing your medications so that you remember to take them and how to travel with your medications. If you can't get to your pharmacist just now I can help you get started. Would you like me to help?
Who can help me with my stiff joints and sore muscles	Your prescribed pain meds can help when you first get home from hospital. You will be shown simple exercises to do by a physiotherapist before you leave hospital that will help free up your muscles and joints. If you haven't been shown these or can't remember them, I can help. Would you like me to show you the exercises.
Who can help me with self-care when I get home	Your occupational therapist can help you with self-care such as looking after your wound, showering and so on.
Who can help me with sleeping	Sleep is very important to your recovery. Taking the pain medications you have been prescribed at least 30 minutes before bed can help you sleep if you are sore. Avoid coffee and other caffeine drinks, especially after midday. Some patients find sleeping upright in a bed or recliner with a neck support helps for the first few days. Sleeping on your back can be comfortable because it takes the load off your chest and heart whilst you recover. If you have to sleep on your side, then sleep on your right side. Studies have shown that sleeping on their left side can make it hard for heart patients to sleep. If you just can't sleep at all your psychologist can help.
CMC Codes	You will need to do some simple things at home such as weighing yourself every day and taking your blood pressure. You will be shown what to do and when before you leave the hospital. If you forget what to do I can show you, just ask me. These tests help show the doctor how you are recovering. You will also be told when to do blood tests to check that your medications are working and that you are taking good care of your heart with your eating and exercise.
How will I get home	

I don't have anyone who can drive me home	The hospital can book a cab for you
I can't afford a cab	The hospital can arrange transport
Can I walk/bus home etc	No, too soon after surgery and won't be able to carry your suitcase etc
How will I get home from hospital	If you don't have family to pick you up and drive you home you can use a cab but make sure you sit in the back and place your cushion between your chest and the seatbelt. If you don't know how you will get home talk to the discharge nurse {procedural and administrative localizations}
Can I drive myself home from hospital	Do not drive a car until after your visit with your surgeon. This office visit is most often four weeks after surgery. A car accident could hurt your breast bone (sternum). You may ride in a car. Either ride in the back seat, or if riding in the front seat, move the seat back as far as possible. Use a pillow between your chest and the seat belt for comfort and to avoid irritation. Do not take long trips until your doctor says you may. When you are allowed to travel, it's important to stop frequently to walk and stretch your legs.
<b>I don't have anyone to support me at home</b>	
I can't cook	There are plenty of frozen meals and fresh and frozen delivered meals that are healthy and will give you what you need to recover. The hospital dietitian/nutritionist {procedural localization} can help you choose. I can also give you advice on what to eat {future functionality – not in PoC}
I live alone	If you live alone talk to the hospital team about home help for a few weeks while you recover. You will be tired and sore, and you are not allowed to do any lifting until your surgery wounds have healed.
How do I wash myself when I get home	You should shower every day to prevent infection. Do not take tub baths until you are told you can do so. You may feel weak the first few times you shower at home <u>so ask someone to stay nearby in case you need help</u> . Don't use very hot water, it can make you dizzy. Use a shower seat if you feel weak or dizzy so that you don't fall. Also, raise both arms together to wash your face and hair, lifting only one arm can hurt your chest. Would you like to see a short video on washing after heart surgery?
Who will look after me when I go home	Before you leave the hospital you will have appointments booked with your doctor, cardiac surgeon and cardiologist to continue your care. If you live alone and don't feel confident to look after yourself, or if your family are unable to help care for you, talk to the {procedural localization} to arrange help.
<b>What do I need to do before I go home</b>	
Do I need any equipment when I go home	A shower chair can be very helpful for at least the first few weeks. You might also need a bed rope which can help you sit up in bed whilst your chest is healing. Some patients find a few extra pillows help with sleeping. Some patients might need a walker and oxygen. The hospital discharge team will talk to you about what you need and where to get them.
Who will show me how to do things at home like changing bandages.	You and your caregiver will be shown what to do during discharge before you leave hospital.
Do I need to buy anything	Some patients find it easier to sleep with a special pillow that helps keep them in a comfortable position. The hospital will tell you what these are and where you can buy them. The other thing is to have some healthy foods at home that are not too heavy because you won't feel like eating much for a few days. The hospital will give you a list of these when you are discharged from the hospital.

Do I take anything home from hospital	Yes. The hospital will give you medications that you must take and some bandages and creams that you will use to stop infection where the doctors had to make cuts for the surgery. You will also be given some written instructions on your medications and looking after cuts. Don't worry if you forget how to use these, I can show you at home anytime you need a reminder. We will also give you a cushion to hold against your chest when you need to cough or when you are in a car. The cushion helps protect your chest for the first few weeks whilst you are getting better.
Do I need anything prepared at home before I leave hospital	Have someone stock up on easy to prepare or heat frozen foods, and things like fresh milk or get a list of places that can deliver healthy meals to suit your budget. Make sure you have the things you need to weigh yourself and take your temperature and blood pressure. You might need to arrange a bed downstairs if you normally sleep upstairs and it's a good idea to get a shower chair.
Who can help me with equipment for when I go home	The occupational therapist can help you get equipment to assist your return home. {procedural localisation}
<b>What can I / can't I do when I get home</b>	
Am I allowed to lift things when I get home	Your chest can take up to 3 months to heal, like any broken bone so you need to be very careful. You will have been told what you can lift and how when you left hospital, but I can remind you now if you like. You can't lift things like groceries, children and suitcases until cleared by your doctor.
Can I climb stairs	You may climb stairs. Be sure to go slowly at first. Take your time. Remember that it takes more energy to climb stairs than to walk. If you become tired or short of breath as you climb, stop, rest, and then continue. Use the stair railing only for balance. Do not pull yourself up the stairs.
Can I do household chores	After a few weeks you can start doing light housework such as dusting. Don't do heavy things like vacuuming and mowing for at least six weeks as these can damage your chest and prevent it healing.
Can I go out	You can, but many patients find it too tiring to go out during their first week or two at home. During the day, make sure you have lots of rest in between any activity at home or if you do go out. It is normal to feel a little short of breath, tired or dizzy. You will also feel sore even with the painkillers while you are recovering. If you do need to go out, try and have someone with you and don't walk too far or carry anything.
Can I go shopping	You can, but many patients find it too tiring to go out during their first week or two at home. During the day, make sure you have lots of rest in between any activity at home or if you do go out. It is normal to feel a little short of breath, tired or dizzy. You will also feel sore even with the painkillers while you are recovering. If you do need to go out, try and have someone with you and don't walk too far or carry anything.
Can I go to church	You can, but many patients find it too tiring to go out during their first week or two at home. During the day, make sure you have lots of rest in between any activity at home or if you do go out. It is normal to feel a little short of breath, tired or dizzy. You will also feel sore even with the painkillers while you are recovering. If you do need to go out, try and have someone with you and don't walk too far or carry anything.
Can I lift things when I get home	Don't lift anything that weighs more than 5 pounds until you're told that its ok. So, don't lift grocery bags, children, briefcases and luggage and so on. In the kitchen drag rather than lift pots and pans and keep everything small. Lifting until you are told its ok can damage your chest and prevent it healing.

Can I use stairs	You may climb stairs. Be sure to go slowly at first. Take your time. Remember that it takes more energy to climb stairs than to walk. If you become tired or short of breath as you climb, stop, rest, and then continue. Use the stair railing only for balance. Do not pull yourself up the stairs.
Do I need to rest when I get home	During the day, balance your activity with rest times. Your body may give you signals that show you need to rest. These signals include symptoms such as shortness of breath, fatigue, dizziness, pain or discomfort
Lots of stairs at home	You may climb stairs. Be sure to go slowly at first. Take your time. Remember that it takes more energy to climb stairs than to walk. If you become tired or short of breath as you climb, stop, rest, and then continue. Use the stair railing only for balance. Do not pull yourself up the stairs.
When can I climb stairs after heart surgery	You may climb stairs. Be sure to go slowly at first. Take your time. Remember that it takes more energy to climb stairs than to walk. If you become tired or short of breath as you climb, stop, rest, and then continue. Use the stair railing only for balance. Do not pull yourself up the stairs.
<b>When can I start being active again</b>	
Do I have any activity restrictions? What am I allowed to and not allowed to do? For how long?	When you return home you need to be careful of your chest which is still healing if you had heart surgery. You will have been told what you can and can't do before you left hospital. You will have also been given restrictions on activities that might make you breath too hard whilst you are recovering. If you have forgotten you should contact the hospital or your doctor for advice.
When can I start bowling again	You can usually go back to cycling, swimming, tennis, golf and bowling after six weeks. Ask your doctor or cardiac rehabilitation health professional about specific sports. Lifting heavy weights and straining can raise your blood pressure and should be avoided but resistance training with light weights can be part of a healthy physical activity program. Talk to your doctor or the cardiac rehabilitation team before you start a resistance training program. Would you like me to show you the rehab video on exercise?
When can I start cycling again	You can usually go back to cycling, swimming, tennis, golf and bowling after six weeks. Ask your doctor or cardiac rehabilitation health professional about specific sports. Lifting heavy weights and straining can raise your blood pressure and should be avoided but resistance training with light weights can be part of a healthy physical activity program. Talk to your doctor or the cardiac rehabilitation team before you start a resistance training program. Would you like me to show you the rehab video on exercise?
When can I start exercising again	It is recommended that you recommence normal daily activities gradually over a six week period, (see page 34). It is important to start with walking and resume normal everyday tasks such as light household tasks. If you have stairs at home there's no reason why you shouldn't be able to climb them slowly.
When can I start lifting weights again	It is important that lifting heavy weights and straining/holding your breath is avoided. However, light resistance exercises can be incorporated as part of a healthy physical activity program. It is recommended that you talk to your doctor or cardiac rehabilitation team before commencing a resistance training program such as weights or specific sport based activities.
When can I start doing sport again	You can usually go back to cycling, swimming, tennis, golf and bowling after six weeks. Ask your doctor or cardiac rehabilitation health professional about specific sports. Lifting heavy weights and straining can raise your blood pressure and should be avoided but resistance training with light weights can be part of a healthy physical activity program. Talk

	to your doctor or the cardiac rehabilitation team before you start a resistance training program. Would you like me to show you the rehab video on exercise?
When can I start playing golf again	You can usually go back to cycling, swimming, tennis, golf and bowling after six weeks. Ask your doctor or cardiac rehabilitation health professional about specific sports. Lifting heavy weights and straining can raise your blood pressure and should be avoided but resistance training with light weights can be part of a healthy physical activity program. Talk to your doctor or the cardiac rehabilitation team before you start a resistance training program. Would you like me to show you the rehab video on exercise?
When can I start playing sport again	You can usually go back to cycling, swimming, tennis, golf and bowling after six weeks. Ask your doctor or cardiac rehabilitation health professional about specific sports. Lifting heavy weights and straining can raise your blood pressure and should be avoided but resistance training with light weights can be part of a healthy physical activity program. Talk to your doctor or the cardiac rehabilitation team before you start a resistance training program. Would you like me to show you the rehab video on exercise?
When can I start playing tennis again	You can usually go back to cycling, swimming, tennis, golf and bowling after six weeks. Ask your doctor or cardiac rehabilitation health professional about specific sports. Lifting heavy weights and straining can raise your blood pressure and should be avoided but resistance training with light weights can be part of a healthy physical activity program. Talk to your doctor or the cardiac rehabilitation team before you start a resistance training program. Would you like me to show you the rehab video on exercise?
When will I be able to have sex	Unless your doctor tells you different you can resume having sex as soon as you feel comfortable. Try to avoid positions that put weight on your chest and upper arms. When you can climb two flights of stairs without getting too tired or short of breath, you probably have enough energy to resume sex.
I'm too embarrassed to talk about sex with my doctor	Doctors are used to having these discussions with patients and you will not be embarrassed. If you don't want to discuss sex with your family doctor for any reason the hospital can recommend another doctor or counsellor. Don't forget that you can have a telehealth consultation with your doctor if that makes it easier to talk about. Would you like me to show you how to talk to your doctor about this using telehealth.
Can I walk up hills	It will be several weeks before you are strong enough to walk up small hills. When you feel ready start small with someone with you for help. Also, walk on the pavement alongside a road so that you can be picked up by a car if you are too tired to go on. You will tire very quickly in the first few months so take it easy.
My surgery has made me impotent	Talk to your doctor because this can often be temporary and you will recover over time. Would you like me to show you how to talk to your doctor about this using telehealth.
My medications are making me impotent	Talk to your doctor because there are alternative heart medications for patients who are experiencing side effects. Would you like me to show you how to talk to your doctor about this using telehealth.
I can't remember the exercises I was told to do before I left hospital	That's ok, it's easy to forget things when you come home. I can show you what to do, we can start now if you like.
I can't remember the walking program I was told to do when I left hospital	That's ok, it's easy to forget things when you come home. I can show you what to do, we can start now if you like.

When can I return to normal activities	You should be able to return to your normal daily activities a few weeks after your heart event or other heart problem. It is important that you gradually build up your activity level to ensure that you are returning to physical activity safely. Talk to your doctor or cardiac rehabilitation team about when you can start different activities again and how to pace your program. Other health conditions, previous physical activity levels, the type of heart condition that you have had, and any other injuries will be considered to ensure that you are performing the most appropriate exercise for your body.
What activity can I do when I get home	After heart surgery, your body must heal for several weeks. The best way to regain your normal activities at home is to use a slow, progressive plan. Over time you should be able to do routine household tasks, take part in recreational activity, and return to work.
<b>General Worries &amp; Questions</b>	
Do I need to keep wearing compression stockings when I get home	Most patients don't need to keep wearing their compression stockings when they go home. Your doctor will tell you if you do need to keep wearing them which they might do if you have a blood clot in your leg from the surgery. Compression stockings need to be fitted by your druggist {procedural localization} to make sure they aren't too tight or too loose.
How will I feel when I get home	Many patients feel upset, frustrated or angry while recovering from major surgery. You might feel happy and full of energy one day and cranky and tired the next day. You might find it hard to concentrate and sleep. These feelings don't last forever. Talk with your family and friends, enjoy simple activities and you'll soon feel better. If you feel depressed or don't think you are getting better do a virtual check-in with your doctor and they can talk to you about what to do.
I feel sad	It is normal to have days when you are feeling down while you are recovering. It is common for people – men and women – to cry more after any major surgery. It is nothing to be embarrassed about. You might also get annoyed with small things, even when your family is trying to help you. These feelings will normally pass after about 4 to 6 weeks. If you feel depressed or are very worried about your feelings contact {procedural localization}.
I have blurred vision	Some patients have blurred vision for up to 3 months after heart surgery. You should wait to get your spectacles checked until after your vision has returned to normal.
I have soreness or have pain	Many patients have muscle aches and pains in their neck, shoulders, back and around where you have surgery incisions such as your chest and leg. These can last for between 6 to 12 weeks. You can try reducing the aches and pains with the exercises you were shown in hospital, warm showers, heat packs, and the pain-relieving tablets you have been given. Some patients don't take the pain tablets for various reasons but if you take them as prescribed you can stay on top of your pain.
I keep forgetting things	It is common to forget things after heart surgery. After about 6 to 10 weeks your memory should improve. Try keeping a list to remind you what to do. It is very important to remember to take your medications at the same time each day so set an alarm on your phone or sit your medications on the kitchen bench or bedside table to remind you. Would you like some more information on remembering your medications?
I'm always very tired	It is normal to feel very tired when you are recovering. Make sure you limit how many visitors you have and get plenty of rest during the day.

I'm constipated	Constipation can be caused by your medications, not eating much, not enough water and not being active. Drinking more water, eating high fibre foods such as bran and prunes and increasing your activity can help. Talk to your {procedural localisation} if it doesn't improve and they can give you a mild laxative to get things moving.
I'm having trouble concentrating	It is common to have trouble concentrating after heart surgery. For example, you might keep reading the same thing over without really understanding it. After about 6 to 10 weeks your concentration should improve.
I'm worried about my family	Like you, your family will feel emotional. They feel responsible to help you with your recovery, are worried that you will overdo things, aren't sure what you have to do and aren't allowed to do and will also feel tired and anxious. Be kind to each other, give each other some space, and take time to talk to each other about your feelings. They can talk to me and I can explain a lot of what you can and can't do, and what you need to do to recover. I can also tell them who to talk to for help.
I'm worried that I won't be able to do everything I've been told	You don't need to worry. Change takes time and energy. Some days you may "slip up" but that's ok, the next day you will get back on track and slowly you will feel the benefits of your improved lifestyle. Get family and friends on board to help you achieve your goals and when you go to rehab you'll find lots more support.
I'm scared to go outside in case I collapse	It's natural to feel anxious but if you follow the exercise program you are given and take your medications you will soon feel confident and strong enough to go walking outside. A lot of patients buy a medic alert bracelet so paramedics can quickly identify any problems if they do feel sick away from your home.
My ankles or legs are swelling	Swelling is common in the leg where a vein was taken for your heart operation. Keep your leg elevated when sitting or in bed to help reduce the swelling. {procedural localisation}
I'm too tired to get out of bed	Get up and get dressed each morning. Don't stay in bed. Moving around helps you recover and to not feel so sore. Moving also helps keep your lungs clear so you don't get an infection.
I get tired doing even small tasks	Break up long tasks into shorter parts, and space them over the day. Stop your tasks before you get tired. If you do too much, you'll likely be tired the next day and need to rest.
What should I wear at home	Wear casual or comfortable clothes each day to help you get back into a regular daily routine.
What should my family and friends know	Tell your family and friends that you will need physical and emotional support for a few months while you recover. Unless you live alone don't have too many visitors in the first few weeks, you will be very tired and need lots of rest.
What to expect during recovery	For the first few weeks you will be tired, and your mood will go up and down. You will need to carefully follow the advice you are given on medications, exercises to help you recover from the surgery, healthy eating and rest so that you can recover as quickly as possible. After that you will start to feel better day by day and after about 8 weeks most patients are living normal lives again.
I'm not getting any better	If you don't think you are getting better check your hospital discharge plan and make sure you are doing everything on it. If you are following the discharge plan and not getting better, you can do discuss your concerns with your doctor. Would you like me to show you how to do a telehealth call with your doctor?
How will I remember all my follow-up appointments and tests.	The discharge staff will write these down for you and you can put them into a diary or calendar app. Make sure you give a copy to your carer and they can help remind you.

When will things be normal again	If there are no complications, you might find that after about 3 months you will feel normal again. In fact, you could feel better than normal if your heart condition was limiting your lifestyle. Your medications, and any changes in diet and exercise will just become your new normal.
I can't afford rehab or the equipment I need at home	If you need assistance, please call Patient Financial Services at (910) 667-7050, or (877) 228-8135, ext. 7050.
I'll be too busy when I get home to look after myself	You will be too tired and sore when you get home to do housework and other strenuous activities. It is very important that you take time to recover and do your daily routine such as your lung and mobility exercises, showering, looking after your surgery wounds, taking your medications and resting. Have family members or friends help you and if there is no one talk to the discharge team at the hospital about home help.
What do I tell my family and friends	It can be tiring and stressful to have to keep repeating what has happened and how you are feeling. Your partner can explain what has happened to close family and it should be enough for friends to know that you are still recovering and will be able to tell them about it when you have fully recovered.
I feel upset/keep crying	It is normal to have days when you are feeling down while you are recovering. It is common for people – men and women – to cry more after any major surgery. It is nothing to be embarrassed about. You might also get annoyed with small things, even when your family is trying to help you. These feelings will normally pass after about 4 to 6 weeks. If you feel depressed or are very worried about your feelings talk to your doctor.
<b>Eating</b>	
Do I have any restrictions with what I eat? If so, what are they?	It is important for your recovery to eat some healthy foods even if you aren't hungry. Have small frequent meals and eat foods that are nourishing such as lean red meats, vegetables and foods with calcium such as milk, yoghurt and cheese. Drink plenty of water unless you are on a fluid restriction. Avoid foods that are high in fat, salt and sugar.
Do I have any restrictions on what I can drink	You should not drink alcohol or so called 'energy drinks' that are high in caffeine until told you can by your doctor. Unless you have been told to limit your fluids because you have heart failure you should try and drink plenty of water to avoid constipation from your medications.
I can't cook	There are plenty of frozen meals and fresh and frozen delivered meals that are healthy and will give you what you need to recover. The hospital dietitian/nutritionist {procedural localization} can help you choose. I can also give you advice on what to eat {future functionality – not in PoC}
I don't feel like eating (variant is nausea)	It is common to lose your appetite after just after heart surgery and many patients have no appetite for the first 2 weeks at home. It is important to your recovery to eat some healthy foods even if you aren't hungry. Have small frequent meals and eat foods that are nourishing such as lean red meats, vegetables and foods with calcium such as milk, yoghurt and cheese. Drink plenty of water unless you are on a fluid restriction.

What is the best meal plan to follow	The Ornish Reversal Program by Dean Ornish provides advice for heart patients on healthy eating and his books also have lots of easy and yummy recipes. Your hospital rehab team might offer the Ornish Reversal Program.
Can I follow the Atkins/Paleo etc diet	High protein diets are generally not recommended for heart patients. You should consult your doctor or accredited dietitian before starting a high protein diet.
How long before I can eat normal foods	It depends on what you call normal foods. If by normal you mean the sort of high fat, high salt and high sugar foods that cause heart disease then you should not eat these again. However, there are some healthy options for foods such as pizza that everyone likes. Try a vegetarian pizza with low fat goat cheese or fetta, just eat one or two slices and add a side salad and you will have an enjoyable healthy meal. Grilled chicken is a great option instead of fried chicken and you can have small serves of lean meat.
<b>First Few Weeks at Home</b>	
How do I wash myself when I get home	You should shower every day to prevent infection. Do not take tub baths until you are told you can do so. You may feel weak the first few times you shower at home so ask someone to stay nearby in case you need help. Don't use very hot water, it can make you dizzy. Use a shower seat if you feel weak or dizzy so that you don't fall. Also, raise both arms together to wash your face and hair, lifting only one arm can hurt your chest. Would you like to see a short video on washing after heart surgery?
How should I shower and take care of my incision(s)?	You should shower every day to prevent infection. Do not take tub baths. Avoid very hot water, which may make you feel dizzy or light-headed. Try to have another person nearby the first few times you take a shower. Avoid scrubbing your wound. After showering, you may want to take a short rest before you dress. This will help to prevent you from tiring out. You can use a shower chair if you are tired or worried about falling.
What does a daily routine look like when I get home?	Lots of rest, making time to do your exercises to clear your lungs and get your joints moving, showering and looking after your surgery wounds, and taking your medications. Frequent small meals to keep your energy up. As you recover you will be able to do more and you will be given advice on what you can do each week at discharge or rehab.
Is a bath or shower better	You should shower every day to prevent infection. Do not take tub baths until you are told you can do so. You may feel weak the first few times you shower at home so ask someone to stay nearby in case you need help. Don't use very hot water, it can make you dizzy. Use a shower seat if you feel weak or dizzy so that you don't fall. Also, raise both arms together to wash your face and hair, lifting only one arm can hurt your chest. Would you like to see a short video on washing after heart surgery?
Is it ok to sleep on tour side after heart surgery	Yes, but only on your right side. Sleeping on your left side has been shown to cause chest discomfort and make it difficult to sleep.
How will I know if I'm not getting better	If the symptoms you had before your surgery return you should talk to your doctor. Everyone is different so don't worry if some people say they felt better straight away and it takes you longer.
<b>Medications</b>	(see full set of meds Q&A)
Can I keep taking the other drugs, vitamins and supplements I was on before my surgery	Your doctor will tell you what you can and can't take and your local druggist can also help. Some of your drugs might have changed and many vitamins and supplements can make stop your heart drugs working properly or make you very sick.

I can't afford my medications	NHRMC has a number of ways to help you keep up with your medications. Through our sliding scale payment program, you may qualify for reduced pricing on your medications if you meet certain household and financial criteria. For more information on this program, please speak with an Outpatient Pharmacy team member for assistance.
I have trouble remembering to take my medications	The outpatient pharmacist at the hospital or your own pharmacist can show you pill dispensers can than help you manage and remember your medications. They can also discuss pre-packaged services such as PillPack and Dispill that put your meds into blister packs that you open for the right medications morning and night. Some patients leave their medications on the kitchen bench or night stand as a reminder but this can be dangerous if there are young children or grandchildren visiting.
How long will I have to take my medications for	Some of your medications will be required for the rest of your life to manage your heart health. Others might be stopped by your doctor once you have recovered. It is important to never stop taking your meds, even for a day, without seeking your doctor's advice. You will lose their protection and some meds can make you very ill if you stop them suddenly.
<b>Back to Work</b>	
When can I go back to work	Your doctor can advise you about the best plan for returning to work. If you have a desk job you might be able to return to work in about 3 to 4 weeks. If you have a physical job you might need to wait up to 12 weeks. If you drive for work you have to wait until you are given clearance by your doctor before you can start driving.
Can I go back to heavy manual work	You will need your doctor's advice before returning to heavy manual work. There are risks even after you recover from your surgery that your doctor will discuss with you. If you are able to return to manual work you will need advice from an occupational therapist to gradually increase what you do to avoid injury.
<b>Travel</b>	
When can I fly again	When you have a heart condition, air travel might need to be restricted. Before you book any flight – whether short or long-haul – discuss your travel plans with your doctor. Also, many airlines will not let you fly for a period after heart surgeries and might require a medical clearance signed by your doctor for several weeks after that.
Will I be able to get travel insurance	Most heart patients can get travel insurance but have to pay more for it. Check with your travel insurance broker first. Also check with your credit card issuer as some cards offer travel insurance that will cover heart issues. Your employer's insurance might cover you for business travel. You shouldn't travel overseas without travel insurance. The cost of heart surgeries and hospitalization can run into the hundreds of thousands of dollars.
When can I start driving	Do not drive a car until after your visit with your surgeon. This office visit is most often four weeks after surgery. A car accident could hurt your breast bone (sternum). You may ride in a car. Either ride in the back seat, or if riding in the front seat, move the seat back as far as possible. Use a pillow between your chest and the seat belt for comfort and to avoid irritation. Do not take long trips until your doctor says you may. When you are allowed to travel, it's important to stop frequently to walk and stretch your legs
Can I drive if I am on pain meds	You will usually not be on your pain meds for very long and will have finished them before your doctor gives you permission to drive. Your pain meds and some of your new heart meds can make you drowsy so you need to read the warnings on the boxes and if you still aren't sure talk to your druggist (pharmacist/chemist? {language localization}).

Can I take my medications overseas	You can but some countries will not allow certain medications, such as pain meds, into their countries. You should check for each country before you travel. Also, it's best to take each medication in an unopened box as dispensed by your druggist. Bringing the opened boxes back home shouldn't be a problem. Also carry a certified letter from your doctor listing the medications and doses.
<b>Discharge</b>	
What happens on the day I leave hospital (or what happens at discharge)	One of the hospital team will take you through what is called discharge. They will talk to you about your medications, aids such as walking sticks you might need at home, what you can and can't do for the first few weeks and how to look after your surgery wounds. They will also set up any follow up medical appointments you need to attend. Your carer can attend discharge with you.
Will I be given medications to take home	You might be given some medications to take home and prescriptions for more that you will need to fill.

Question	Answer
Do I take anything home from hospital	Yes. The hospital will give you medications that you must take and some bandages and creams that you will use to stop infection where the doctors had to make cuts for the surgery. You will also be given some written instructions on your medications and looking after cuts. Don't worry if you forget how to use these, I can show you at home anytime you need a reminder. We will also give you a cushion to hold against your chest when you need to cough or when you are in a car. The cushion helps protect your chest for the first few weeks whilst you are getting better.
Do I need to buy anything	Some patients find it easier to sleep with a special pillow that helps keep them in a comfortable position. The hospital will tell you what these are and where you can buy them. The other thing is to have some healthy foods at home that are not too heavy because you won't feel like eating much for a few days. The hospital will give you a list of these when you are discharged from the hospital.
I can't afford it	
It costs too much	
Can the hospital give it to me	
Can the hospital loan it to me	
TED stockings extra pair	
Is a bath or shower better	You should shower every day to prevent infection. Do not take tub baths until you are told you can do so. You may feel weak the first few times you shower at home so ask someone to stay nearby in case you need help. Don't use very hot water, it can make you dizzy. Use a shower seat if you feel weak or dizzy so

	that you don't fall. Also, raise both arms together to wash your face and hair, lifting only one arm can hurt your chest. Would you like to see a short video on washing after heart surgery?
Can I have a bath	
Can I have a shower	
Can I climb stairs	You may climb stairs. Be sure to go slowly at first. Take your time. Remember that it takes more energy to climb stairs than to walk. If you become tired or short of breath as you climb, stop, rest, and then continue. Use the stair railing only for balance. Do not pull yourself up the stairs.
Can I walk up hills	
When can I take a bath after heart surgery	You should shower every day to prevent infection. Do not take tub baths until you are told you can do so. You may feel weak the first few times you shower at home so ask someone to stay nearby in case you need help. Don't use very hot water, it can make you dizzy. Use a shower seat if you feel weak or dizzy so that you don't fall. Also, raise both arms together to wash your face and hair, lifting only one arm can hurt your chest. Would you like to see a short video on washing after heart surgery?
How should you sleep after heart surgery	
When can I climb stairs after heart surgery	You may climb stairs. Be sure to go slowly at first. Take your time. Remember that it takes more energy to climb stairs than to walk. If you become tired or short of breath as you climb, stop, rest, and then continue. Use the stair railing only for balance. Do not pull yourself up the stairs.
Activity	
Rest	
Sex	
Is it ok to sleep on your side after heart surgery	
How do I pace myself once I am home?	
What does a daily routine look like?	
How should I shower and take care of my incision(s)?	You should shower every day to prevent infection. Do not take tub baths. Avoid very hot water, which may make you feel dizzy or light-headed. Try to have another person nearby the first few times you take a shower. Avoid scrubbing your wound. After showering, you may want to take a short rest before you dress. This will help to prevent you from tiring out. You can use a shower chair if you are tired or worried about falling.
Should I weigh myself?	
Should I take my temperature	
What is the best meal plan to follow	
How is pain relief managed	

What if I have swelling	
Returning to Normal Activities	You should be able to return to your normal daily activities a few weeks after your heart event or other heart problem. It is important that you gradually build up your activity level to ensure that you are returning to physical activity safely. Talk to your doctor or cardiac rehabilitation team about when you can start different activities again and how to pace your program. Other health conditions, previous physical activity levels, the type of heart condition that you have had, and any other injuries will be considered to ensure that you are performing the most appropriate exercise for your body.
When can I start exercising again	<p>It is recommended that you recommence normal daily activities gradually over a six week period, (see page <b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>). It is important to start with walking and resume normal everyday tasks such as light household tasks. If you have stairs at home there's no reason why you shouldn't be able to climb them slowly.</p> <p>It is important that lifting heavy weights and straining/holding your breath is avoided. However, light resistance exercises can be incorporated as part of a healthy physical activity program. It is recommended that you talk to your doctor or cardiac rehabilitation team before commencing a resistance training program such as weights or specific sport based activities.</p>
When can I start playing sport again	You can usually go back to cycling, swimming, tennis, golf and bowling after six weeks. Ask your doctor or cardiac rehabilitation health professional about specific sports. Lifting heavy weights and straining can raise your blood pressure and should be avoided but resistance training with light weights can be part of a healthy physical activity program. Talk to your doctor or the cardiac rehabilitation team before you start a resistance training program. Would you like me to show you the rehab video on exercise?
When can I start exercising again	You can usually go back to cycling, swimming, tennis, golf and bowling after six weeks. Ask your doctor or cardiac rehabilitation health professional about specific sports. Lifting heavy weights and straining can raise your blood pressure and should be avoided but resistance training with light weights can be part of a healthy physical activity program. Talk to your doctor or the cardiac rehabilitation team before you start a resistance training program. Would you like me to show you the rehab video on exercise?
When can I start cycling again	You can usually go back to cycling, swimming, tennis, golf and bowling after six weeks. Ask your doctor or cardiac rehabilitation health professional about specific sports. Lifting heavy weights and straining can raise your blood pressure and should be avoided but resistance training with light weights can be part of a healthy physical activity program. Talk to your doctor or the cardiac rehabilitation team before you start a resistance training program. Would you like me to show you the rehab video on exercise?

When can I start playing tennis again	You can usually go back to cycling, swimming, tennis, golf and bowling after six weeks. Ask your doctor or cardiac rehabilitation health professional about specific sports. Lifting heavy weights and straining can raise your blood pressure and should be avoided but resistance training with light weights can be part of a healthy physical activity program. Talk to your doctor or the cardiac rehabilitation team before you start a resistance training program. Would you like me to show you the rehab video on exercise?
When can I start playing golf again	You can usually go back to cycling, swimming, tennis, golf and bowling after six weeks. Ask your doctor or cardiac rehabilitation health professional about specific sports. Lifting heavy weights and straining can raise your blood pressure and should be avoided but resistance training with light weights can be part of a healthy physical activity program. Talk to your doctor or the cardiac rehabilitation team before you start a resistance training program. Would you like me to show you the rehab video on exercise?
When can I start bowling again	You can usually go back to cycling, swimming, tennis, golf and bowling after six weeks. Ask your doctor or cardiac rehabilitation health professional about specific sports. Lifting heavy weights and straining can raise your blood pressure and should be avoided but resistance training with light weights can be part of a healthy physical activity program. Talk to your doctor or the cardiac rehabilitation team before you start a resistance training program. Would you like me to show you the rehab video on exercise?
Question about medications	
Activities to do or avoid *****	
When do I call my doctor *****	You should call your doctor if you notice any of the following which might be signs of heart problems. You gain more than 3 pounds in a day or more than 5 pounds in a week. You have chills, sweating or a fever over 100 degrees F for more than a day. Your heart seems to be beating fast or slow or skipping beats. You have shortness of breath while resting. You have unexplained bruising or bleeding. You have pain in your chest or shoulder that gets worse with deep breathing or coughing. You have swelling, redness, oozing or tenderness near your surgical wounds.
What should my family and friends know	Tell your family and friends that you will need physical and emotional support for a few months while you recover. Unless you live alone don't have too many visitors in the first few weeks, you will be very tired and need lots of rest.
How should I take care of my heart	
Some tips to remember	
the person's future care needs	
any equipment required	
what services are available	
follow up tests, appointments and medication	
how to make sure their home is suitable	

anything else you need to ask.	
I live alone	If you live alone talk to the hospital team about home help for a few weeks while you recover. You will be tired and sore, and you are not allowed to do any lifting until your surgery wounds have healed.
Lots of stairs at home	You may climb stairs. Be sure to go slowly at first. Take your time. Remember that it takes more energy to climb stairs than to walk. If you become tired or short of breath as you climb, stop, rest, and then continue. Use the stair railing only for balance. Do not pull yourself up the stairs.
Can I go out	You can, but many patients find it too tiring to go out during their first week or two at home. During the day, make sure you have lots of rest in between any activity at home or if you do go out. It is normal to feel a little short of breath, tired or dizzy. You will also feel sore even with the painkillers while you are recovering. If you do need to go out, try and have someone with you and don't walk too far or carry anything.
Can I go to church	You can, but many patients find it too tiring to go out during their first week or two at home. During the day, make sure you have lots of rest in between any activity at home or if you do go out. It is normal to feel a little short of breath, tired or dizzy. You will also feel sore even with the painkillers while you are recovering. If you do need to go out, try and have someone with you and don't walk too far or carry anything.
Can I go shopping	You can, but many patients find it too tiring to go out during their first week or two at home. During the day, make sure you have lots of rest in between any activity at home or if you do go out. It is normal to feel a little short of breath, tired or dizzy. You will also feel sore even with the painkillers while you are recovering. If you do need to go out, try and have someone with you and don't walk too far or carry anything.
What to expect during recovery	For the first few weeks you will be tired, and your mood will go up and down. You will need to carefully follow the advice you are given on medications, exercises to help you recover from the surgery, healthy eating and rest so that you can recover as quickly as possible. After that you will start to feel better day by day and after about 8 weeks most patients are living normal lives again.
Back to work	Your doctor can advise you about the best plan for returning to work. If you have a desk job you might be able to return to work in about 3 to 4 weeks. If you have a physical job you might need to wait up to 12 weeks. If you drive for work you have to wait until you are given clearance your doctor before you can start driving.
Back to driving	Do not drive a car until after your visit with your surgeon. This office visit is most often four weeks after surgery. A car accident could hurt your breast bone (sternum). You may ride in a car. Either ride in the back seat, or if riding in the front seat, move the seat back as far as possible. Use a pillow between your chest

	and the seat belt for comfort and to avoid irritation. Do not take long trips until your doctor says you may. When you are allowed to travel, it's important to stop frequently to walk and stretch your legs
What help will I need at home	
Shower chair	
Someone stay with you	
Accessing home care community care	
Arrange transport home	
<a href="https://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/servicesandsupport/preparing-to-leave-hospital">https://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/servicesandsupport/preparing-to-leave-hospital</a>	
Pain and restricted mobility	
Cant drive pain meds	
Changing where you sleep	
Frozen meals, fresh and frozen meal delivery etc	
Not wanting to leave hospital	
Want to leave hospital earlier	
Not feeling well at home/recovery not good - review discharge plan first	
Equipment/aids	
Which doctor/s do I need to see after I'm discharged? What tests do I need to do? When do I need to see them? What are their phone numbers?	
May I have the latest list of my medications?	
Do I continue to take the other medicines I used to take, but are not on this list? (including vitamins and supplements)	
What number do I call if I have questions about my medicines?	
What care am I going to get after discharge? (i.e., Home Health, Outpatient Therapy, Rehab/Skilled Nursing, etc.)	

Do I need a caregiver? If so, who is it and how do I contact this person?	
Who is going to pick up my prescriptions, and drive me to my doctor's appointments?	
What do I need to do at home to get better? (i.e., weigh myself, check my blood pressure, check my blood sugar, special exercises, etc.)	
Can you show me (and my caregiver) how to do tasks that require special skills (i.e., changing a bandage, giving a shot)? Can you please watch me/or my caregiver do it and let me know if I'm doing it correctly? What number do I call if I need help with these tasks?	
What problems do I watch out for? What do I do about them, and when do I call? What number do I call when I have problems?	
Do I need medical equipment? (i.e. walker, oxygen, etc.) Who will arrange for this? What number do I call if I have questions about this equipment?	
Do I have any activity restrictions? What am I allowed to and not allowed to do? For how long?	
Do I have any restrictions with what I eat? If so, what are they?	
Can I talk to a social worker? Are there any ways to help with my costs? (For coping issues, and concerns about how much you will pay.)	
When will things be normal again	
Before you leave hospital, make sure you and your family are clear about what you have to do to care for yourself at home.	

Before you leave hospital, make sure you understand what medication you need and when to take it.	
Make sure you know what activities you will not be able to do yourself at home. Organise to get help with these activities if you need it, for example, nursing care or Meals on Wheels.	
Write down all your follow-up appointments and tests.	
Make a list of people and services you can call on at home for medical and emotional support.	
If you want to leave hospital early or do not feel ready to go home on your discharge date, talk with your healthcare professional or hospital social worker.	
Make sure you understand anything you have to do before leaving hospital – this might include going over your hospital discharge plan, picking up any aids or equipment you need for your recovery (for example, a walking stick) or filling a prescription.	
Be clear about anything you have to do at home to help you recover. This may include doing certain exercises, avoiding heavy lifting, drinking lots of fluids, changing your dressing or taking medication. Ask as many questions as you need to make sure you understand. It may also help to take some notes so you do not forget important information.	
Ask what activities you will be able to do once you get home, such as driving, bathing and climbing stairs.	

Understand what the warning signs might be that will mean you have to call a healthcare professional or return to hospital.	
Check if there are any follow-up appointments you need to make with your healthcare professional or at an outpatient clinic. Record these dates in your phone or diary, along with any special instructions for these appointments (for example, not eating before a blood test).	
a discharge letter about your diagnosis and treatment to discuss with your GP an 'easy to read' medicine list to help you manage your new medicines at home	
instructions about the medicines you were taking <b>before</b> you were admitted to hospital and any changes that have been made	
information about how to care for any surgical wounds or how to use any aids e.g. crutches	
advice about any further tests you might need	
details of when you will need to see your GP or attend an outpatient clinic	
any X-rays and all your personal belongings	
information about your special needs at home such as hand rails, wheel chair, preventing falls, diet	
information about any exercises you might need to continue at home.	
a signed Patient Assisted Travel Scheme (PATS) form, if you are a country patient.	
Immunisations	Your doctor will advise what regular immunisations you should have. These can include yearly flu shots and occasional pneumonia shots until you reach the number required for lifelong protection.

What activity can I do when I get home	<p>After heart surgery, your body must heal for several weeks. The best way to regain your normal activities at home is to use a slow, progressive plan. Over time you should be able to do routine household tasks, take part in recreational activity, and return to work.</p> <p>Get up and get dressed each morning. Don't stay in bed.</p> <p>Wear casual or comfortable clothes each day to help you get back into a regular daily routine.</p> <p>Break up long tasks into shorter parts, and space them over the day. Stop your tasks before you get tired. If you do too much, you'll likely be tired the next day and need to rest.</p>
Do I need to rest when I get home	<p>During the day, balance your activity with rest times. Your body may give you signals that show you need to rest. These signals include symptoms such as:</p> <p>Shortness of breath Fatigue Dizziness Pain Discomfort</p> <p>Try to plan ahead for short rest times so you will not become too tired.</p>
Can I use stairs	<p>You may climb stairs. Be sure to go slowly at first. Take your time. Remember that it takes more energy to climb stairs than to walk. If you become tired or short of breath as you climb, stop, rest, and then continue. Use the stair railing only for balance. Do not pull yourself up the stairs.</p>
Can I drive myself home from hospital	<p>Do not drive a car until after your visit with your surgeon. This office visit is most often four weeks after surgery. A car accident could hurt your breast bone (sternum). You may ride in a car. Either ride in the back seat, or if riding in the front seat, move the seat back as far as possible. Use a pillow between your chest and the seat belt for comfort and to avoid irritation. Do not take long trips until your doctor says you may. When you are allowed to travel, it's important to stop frequently to walk and stretch your legs.</p>

How do I wash myself when I get home	You should shower every day to prevent infection. Do not take tub baths until you are told you can do so. You may feel weak the first few times you shower at home so ask someone to stay nearby in case you need help. Don't use very hot water, it can make you dizzy. Use a shower seat if you feel weak or dizzy so that you don't fall. Also, raise both arms together to wash your face and hair, lifting only one arm can hurt your chest. Would you like to see a short video on washing after heart surgery?
When will I be able to have sex	Unless your doctor tells you different you can resume having sex as soon as you feel comfortable. Try to avoid positions that put weight on your chest and upper arms. When you can climb two flights of stairs without getting too tired or short of breath, you probably have enough energy to resume sex.
How will I feel when I get home	Many patients feel upset, frustrated or angry while recovering from major surgery. You might feel happy and full of energy one day and cranky and tired the next day. You might find it hard to concentrate and sleep. These feelings don't last forever. Talk with your family and friends, enjoy simple activities and you'll soon feel better. If you feel depressed or don't think you are getting better do a virtual check-in with your doctor and they can talk to you about what to do.
When will things get back to normal	
DVT and compression stockings	
I'm worried that I won't be able to do everything I've been told	You don't need to worry. Change takes time and energy. Some days you may "slip up" but that's ok, the next day you will get back on track and slowly you will feel the benefits of your improved lifestyle. Get family and friends on board to help you achieve your goals and when you go to rehab you'll find lots more support.
Can I lift things when I get home	Don't lift anything that weighs more than 5 pounds until you're told that its ok. So, don't lift grocery bags, children, briefcases and luggage and so on. In the kitchen drag rather than lift pots and pans and keep everything small. Lifting until you are told its ok can damage your chest and prevent it healing.
Can I do household chores	After a few weeks you can start doing light housework such as dusting. Don't do heavy things like vacuuming and mowing for at least six weeks as these can damage your chest and prevent it healing.