

# Discharge Instructions for Cardiac Catheterization

Cardiac catheterization is an invasive procedure to look for certain heart problems. These problems may affect the heart's chambers, valves, and blood vessels. A thin, flexible tube (catheter) is put in a blood vessel in your groin or arm. The catheter is moved to the heart. The health care provider can look at the blood flow, blood pressure, and oxygen. They can inject contrast fluid into your blood. This flows to your heart. The provider can then take X-rays pictures of your heart.

Coronary angiography is often done as part of a cardiac cath. This looks for blocked areas in the arteries that send blood to the heart. If a blockage is found, your provider may try to open up the artery. They may put a stent in place. Your provider will talk with you about the results of your procedure. Ask any questions you have before you leave. This sheet will help you take care of yourself at home.

## Home care

- ◆ Have a responsible adult drive you home after your procedure.
- ◆ Don't drive or make any important decisions for at least 24 hours after getting any type of sedation or anesthesia.
- ◆ Drink 6 to 8 glasses of water over the next 24 hours. This is to help flush the contrast dye out of your body. Call your health care team if your urine has any change in color.
- ◆ Take your temperature every day for 3 to 5 days. If you feel cold and clammy or start sweating, take your temperature right away. Call your health care team.
- ◆ Do only light and easy activities for the next 2 to 3 days. Ask for help with chores and errands while you recover. Have someone drive you to your appointments.
- ◆ Don't lift anything heavy until your health care team says it's safe.
- ◆ Ask your health care team when you can expect to return to work. Unless your job involves lifting, you may be able to return to your normal activities within 2 days.
- ◆ Take your medicines as directed. Don't skip doses.
- ◆ Check your incisions every day for signs of infection. These include redness, swelling, and fluid leaking. It's normal to have a small bruise or bump where the catheter was put in. A bruise that's getting larger is not normal. Tell your health care team about this. Call your team if you see blood forming in the incision. Go to the emergency room if you have uncontrolled bleeding from the artery site. This is even more important if you take medicines that make it hard for your blood to clot. These include aspirin, clopidogrel, prasugrel, and brilinta.
- ◆ Eat a healthy diet. Make sure it's low in fat, salt, and cholesterol. Ask your health care team for diet information.
- ◆ Stop smoking. Sign up for a quit-smoking program. Or ask your health care team for help.
- ◆ Exercise as your health care team tells you to. Your team may advise you to start a cardiac rehab program. Cardiac rehab is an exercise program where trained health care staff watch your progress and stress on your heart while you exercise. Ask your team how to enroll.
- ◆ Don't swim or take baths until your health care team says it's OK. You can shower the day after the procedure. Keep the site clean and dry. This keeps the incision from getting wet and infected until the skin and artery can heal.
- ◆ Follow all other after-care instructions from your team.

## Follow-up care

- ◆ Make a follow-up appointment as advised. It's common to have a follow-up appointment 2 to 4 weeks after an angioplasty or coronary stent procedure.
- ◆ Make a yearly appointment. This is to make sure you're still doing well and not having any new symptoms.
- ◆ Don't wait for a follow-up appointment if your medicines aren't working or you're having heart-related symptoms. Call your provider.

# When to contact your doctor

Contact your provider right away if:

- ◆ You have severe or increasing pain, numbness, coldness, or a bluish color in the leg or arm that held the catheter.
- ◆ You have a fever of 100.4° F ( 38°C) or higher, or as advised by your provider.
- ◆ There are signs of infection at the incision site. These include redness, swelling, drainage, or warmth.
- ◆ There is bleeding, bruising, or a lot of swelling where the catheter was inserted.
- ◆ You have blood in your urine.
- ◆ Your stools are black or tarry.
- ◆ You have any unusual bleeding.
- ◆ Your heartbeat is irregular, very slow, or fast.
- ◆ You are dizzy.

## Call 911

Call 911 if:

- ◆ You have chest pain.
- ◆ You are short of breath.
- ◆ You feel sudden numbness or weakness in arms, legs, or face, or have trouble speaking.
- ◆ The puncture site swells up very fast.
- ◆ You have bleeding from the puncture site that doesn't slow down with firm pressure.