



information

Cardiac catheterization

Discharge instructions

If you have questions that are not answered by these instructions, please ask your nurse or doctor.

You have had a **cardiac catheterization**. This is a procedure in which a small plastic tube (catheter) is threaded into the heart from a blood vessel in the leg or arm. To do the procedure, a small puncture was made in one of your arteries.

Please follow these instructions as you recover from this procedure.

- You should not drive for 48 hours after the procedure.
- Go back to taking any medicine you were on before, unless your doctor has told you otherwise. Be sure your doctor knows about everything you are taking, including prescription medicines, non-prescription medicines, vitamins, herbs, and supplements.
- You may take acetaminophen (Tylenol) every six hours as needed for pain in the area where the catheter was placed. If pain is not relieved with acetaminophen, contact your doctor. **Please note:** It is not safe to take more than the recommended dose of Tylenol. Do **not** take more Tylenol than what is recommended on the label. Also, please be aware that a number of non-prescription products (for example, some cold medicines, other pain relievers) contain acetaminophen. Be sure you are not taking more than one product containing acetaminophen.
- **For at least one week**, you should not lift, push, or pull anything heavier than 10 pounds or do any exercise that causes you to hold your breath and bear down with your abdominal muscles. Take care not to put strain on your abdominal muscles when coughing, sneezing, or moving your bowels.
- One week after the procedure, you may resume your regular activities, including sexual activity.
- After one week, we suggest that you begin your exercise program at half your usual routine for the first few days, then gradually work back to your full routine. **Please note: If you have recently had a heart attack**, different exercise instructions apply. Please talk with your doctor about your exercise instructions.
- You should not bathe or swim until the puncture site is healed. This usually takes

 **Call if you have problems or questions**

617-667-8800

Emergency – Call 911

about a week.

- You may remove the Band-Aid over your puncture site and shower the day after the procedure.
- Ask your doctor when you may go back to work. This will depend on the type of work you do.
- **Get help right away if you notice:**
 - ✓ swelling, redness, or bleeding at the puncture site (You may notice a small bruise around the puncture site. This is normal and will go away in one-two weeks.)
 - ✓ pain at the puncture site that is not relieved by Tylenol, or pain that is getting worse instead of better
 - ✓ fever of 101 or more
 - ✓ any other symptom that concerns you
- Call your own doctor once you are home to schedule a follow-up appointment.

Note: You underwent a procedure performed under fluoroscopic (x-ray) guidance. Fluoroscopy is a type of medical imaging that shows a series of x-ray images on a monitor, much like an x-ray movie. The amount of radiation used depended on many factors, including your body size and the level of complexity encountered during the procedure. Procedures involving a greater amount of radiation that may result in some changes to the skin. Although most patients do not develop any problems, we want to remind you that this procedure may cause injury to the exposed skin and hair. These effects may be increased if you have had previous radiation exposure to the same skin area, particularly within the past twelve months. Radiation injury to the area of exposed skin can take many forms, including redness, blistering, loss of the hair over the skin, and breakdown of skin. These effects can appear after a few weeks or even after several months. Please remind your primary care provider to examine your skin periodically over the next 12 months for evidence of radiation injury, as skin changes may not appear immediately. If at any time you notice changes to your skin, please contact us 617-667-8800 to arrange further evaluation.