Going Home After Your Cardiac Catheterization

(Dye Test)
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Discharge from hospital

• Your health care team will let you know an estimated discharge date.

• If you were transferred from your home hospital for your cardiac catheterization, you may be transferred back the following morning.

Outpatients:

• Your nurse will let you know when you can expect to leave the hospital.

• A responsible adult must come directly to the nursing unit to pick you up, and then stay with you until the morning after your cardiac catheterization.

When can I take a bath?

• Do not take a bath or swim in a pool for 2 days.

• You can shower the morning after your cardiac catheterization. Try to keep the bandage/Band-Aid® dry.

• Do not point the shower stream at the puncture site (spot on your body where dye was put in).
When can I take off the Band-Aid®/bandage?

- You can take off the Band-Aid® the day after your cardiac catheterization.
- You can take off the transparent dressing (if you have a puncture site in your wrist) the day after your cardiac catheterization. You may replace it with a Band-Aid®.
- If the puncture site has not healed, put on a new Band-Aid®.

Care after sedation

- Sedation is treatment given to relax you and to lessen pain during a cardiac catheterization.
- After sedation medication, you may be drowsy and may not remember parts of your cardiac catheterization.
- The effects of sedation should not last for more than 24 hours (1 day).
- In the 24 hours after you receive sedation:
  - do not make any important decisions
  - do not sign legal documents or make large purchases
  - avoid alcohol
  - do not drive
When can I drive my car?

Outpatients: You may return to driving 24 hours after an uncomplicated cardiac catheterization. Your cardiologist will tell you when you can return to driving.

Inpatients: Returning to driving is dependent on your reason for admission to hospital. Your cardiologist will tell you when you can return to driving. It will not be based on the timeline of your cardiac catheterization.

Medications

Some of your medications may be reduced or stopped after your cardiac catheterization. Your doctor will talk about this with you before you go home.

Instructions for puncture site in upper leg/groin

To prevent bleeding:

• Apply gentle pressure to the puncture site when you laugh, cough, sneeze, urinate (pee), or move your bowels (poop) for the next 2 days.

• Blood may flow from the puncture site (bleeding) or stay under the skin in the form of a firm “lump” ranging in size from a “walnut” to a “golf ball” or bigger.
• If you notice bleeding or a growing lump while you are in the hospital, apply firm pressure with your hand to the site, return to bed, and ring for the nurse.

• If bleeding or a lump under the skin happens after you are discharged, lie on your back and apply pressure until the bleeding stops or the lump gets smaller. Someone may need to help you with this.

• Apply pressure with your hand about half an inch above the puncture site.

• If a lump does not soften after 5 minutes of pressure, your family doctor should check it the next day.

• If you are not able to stop the bleeding or the lump keeps getting bigger, call 911 to take you to the nearest Emergency Department.

General precautions (upper leg/groin puncture site):

• You may shower the morning after your cardiac catheterization. Do not point the water right at the puncture site.

• Do not take a tub bath, swim in a pool, sit in a sauna, or soak in a hot tub for 2 days after your cardiac catheterization.

• You can take the Band-Aid® off 24 hours after your cardiac catheterization.

• Avoid bending, squatting, and heavy lifting for at least 2 days.
• Do not play any rough sports such as tennis or go jogging for 2 days after your cardiac catheterization.

• Climb stairs slowly and do not walk fast for the first 2 days after your cardiac catheterization.

Instructions for puncture site in wrist
• Remove the transparent dressing 24 hours (1 day) after it was put on, and replace with a small Band-Aid®.

• If bleeding starts after you go home:
  › Sit down and apply firm pressure to the site with your fingers for 10 minutes.
  › If the bleeding stops, sit quietly with your wrist straight for 2 hours. Tell your doctor as soon as possible.
  › If the bleeding does not stop after 10 minutes of pressure or if there is a large amount of bleeding or spurting, call 911 immediately. Do not drive yourself to the hospital.

• Expect mild tingling and tenderness of your hand and fingers for up to 3 days.

• Contact your doctor immediately if you develop severe (very bad) pain in your hand.
General precautions (wrist puncture site):

• You may shower the morning after your cardiac catheterization. Do not point the water right at the puncture site.

• Do not take a tub bath, swim in a pool, sit in a sauna, or soak in a hot tub for 2 days (48 hours) after your cardiac catheterization.

• For **24 hours (1 day)** after your cardiac catheterization:
  › Do not put any direct pressure on the wrist used for your cardiac catheterization. For example, do not push yourself up out of a chair or bed with this arm.

• For **48 hours (2 days)** after your cardiac catheterization:
  › Do not operate a tractor, lawn mower, motorcycle, or ATV.
  › Do not lift anything heavier than 1 pound with the wrist used for your cardiac catheterization.
  › Do not do any activities that require you to use or bend the wrist a lot. For example, do not golf, paint, or do housework.

• For **3 days** after your cardiac catheterization:
  › Do not lift anything heavier than 5 pounds with the wrist used for your cardiac catheterization.

• For **5 days** after your cardiac catheterization:
  › Do not do any vigorous exercise that uses the wrist used for your cardiac catheterization. For example, do not play tennis.
Call 911 to take you to the nearest Emergency Department if you:
› are not able to stop bleeding at the puncture site
› have intense pain at the puncture site
› have severe chest pain or pressure

Talk to your family doctor if you:
› have fever or chills
› see pus at the puncture site
› notice a firm lump at the puncture site that does not soften after pressure is applied for 5 minutes

General instructions

Drinking fluids
• Drink plenty of fluids for 24 hours (1 day) to prevent dehydration from the dye used during the cardiac catheterization.
• Drink water, juice, or non-cola pop.
• Avoid caffeine for the first 24 hours as it can make you more dehydrated.

Followup visit with your cardiologist
It is important to see your cardiologist again if told to do so.
Exercise

• Exercise can help keep your weight down, improve your cholesterol level, and help prevent arteries from clogging.

• We suggest that you start a walking program 2 days after your cardiac catheterization. Check with your doctor if this is OK for you.

• If your cardiac catheterization was done through your wrist, there are some activities you should avoid for up to 5 days after the cardiac catheterization. These are listed in the section on ‘Instructions for puncture site in wrist’ in this pamphlet.

Lifestyle

A healthy lifestyle includes:
› eating a low-fat, low-sugar diet
› stopping smoking
› increasing your activity level (if your doctor tells you it is OK to do so)
› limiting alcohol to 2 drinks per day
  (1 drink = 1 oz. hard liquor, 4 oz. wine, or 12 oz. beer)
› taking the medications suggested by your doctor
› learning to relax
What if I have chest pain?

- If you have severe chest pain or pressure after you leave the hospital, call an ambulance to take you to the nearest emergency department. **Do not drive yourself.**

- If you have chest pain that is like the pain you had before your cardiac catheterization, call and see your family doctor as soon as possible.

What are your questions?
Please ask. We are here to help you.

Notes:
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Contact your local public library for books, videos, magazines, and other resources.
For more information, go to http://library.novascotia.ca
Connect with a registered nurse in Nova Scotia any time: call 811 or visit https://811.novascotia.ca
Learn about other programs and services in your community: call 211 or visit http://ns.211.ca

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