

## Transcatheter Aortic Valve Procedure: After Hospital Care

Your heart valve was replaced using a small thin tube (catheter) that was inserted into a blood vessel in your groin area (femoral artery) and slowly passed to the heart. The following provides helpful information to assist your recovery at home.

*If you have any questions or concerns, please ask your doctor or nurse.*

### Activity

While the wound is healing, bleeding or swelling can occur as a result of stress or strain to the groin and abdominal muscles. Carefully follow these guidelines:

- On the day of discharge, limit your activities.
- No driving for 24 hours.
- Showering is permitted. But, no tub baths or swimming for 1 week.
- Climbing stairs and walking are permitted.
- You may resume your usual activities the day after discharge, including normal social activities, but:
  - No heavy lifting (greater than 10 pounds) for 1 week.
  - No strenuous physical exercise for 1 week (such as tennis, running, swimming, golfing, weight lifting, bicycling).
- No sexual activity for 1 week.

We recommend Cardiac Rehab for all patients following valve replacement. We will discuss this with you during your Valve Clinic follow-up appointment.

### Wound Care

After the procedure, dressings are applied to the puncture sites. These are removed prior to discharge. Keep the sites clean and dry. Avoid lotions, ointments or powders at the wound sites for 1 week.

### Wound Healing

The healing wound should remain soft and dry. A bruise (black and blue) or a marble-size lump may be present. Please notify your doctor or the interventional valve team if any of the following signs appear:

- Redness around the puncture site
- Drainage from the puncture site
- Increased swelling around the puncture site
- Pain at the puncture site that makes walking difficult
- Numbness or tingling in the thigh or leg
- Changes in the normal color or coolness of the leg or foot

## Arterial Bleeding

The following signs could indicate that the puncture in the vessel has reopened and that there is active bleeding:

- Rapidly expanding swelling of the area around the puncture site, which may be pulsating.
- Continuous profuse bleeding from puncture site.

This would be rare, but it is a **medical emergency** needing **immediate medical attention**. ***Apply hard pressure above the puncture site and call 911.***

## Medications

Following the valve replacement, blood-thinning medications will be prescribed for you. This medicine helps prevent blood clots on the valve leaflets (valve thrombosis).

### ▪ Aspirin

You will take an aspirin 81 mg tablet daily.

Continue taking aspirin as instructed by your physician. This is usually continued lifelong.

### ▪ Plavix® (Clopidogrel):

You will take a Plavix 75 mg tablet daily.

Continue taking Plavix as instructed by your physician. This is usually continued for 6 months.

You will receive specific instructions after your valve procedure if you take any of the following medicines:

- Warfarin (Coumadin®)
- Apixaban (Eliquis®)
- Rivaroxaban (Xarelto®)
- Dabigatran (Pradaxa®)

**Do not stop these medicines without talking with your cardiologist first.**

Take all other medicines as directed by your doctor. Do not take any extra aspirin or anti-inflammatory medicines such as Motrin®, Aleve® or others. They can increase your risk of bleeding. Many over-the-counter drugs contain aspirin. If you are unsure about what the drug contains, check with your pharmacist or doctor before taking it.

## Special Guidelines

Before any minor surgical or dental procedures, always inform all of your healthcare providers that you have had heart valve surgery. Tell your dentist that your surgeon suggests following the American College of Cardiology/American Heart Association valvular heart disease guidelines.

Carry your valve information card with you at all times. This provides useful information about your heart valve to any physician or healthcare provider. It also is important to tell your healthcare providers that you are taking blood thinners.

If a problem occurs, or if you have any questions, please call the Bluhm Cardiovascular Institute Valve Clinic 312.695.4965.

## Warning Signs and Symptoms

### ***Chest Pain and Other Symptoms***

Please notify your doctor **immediately** or **go to the nearest emergency room** if you have any of the following:

- Chest discomfort or pain
- Dizziness, light-headedness or fainting
- Shortness of breath with exertion
- An irregular heartbeat

## Northwestern Medicine – Health Information Resources

For more information, contact Northwestern Memorial Hospital’s Alberto Culver Health Learning Center (HLC) at [hlc@nm.org](mailto:hlc@nm.org), or by calling 312.926.5465. Health information professionals can help you find the information you need and provide you with personal support at no charge.

For more information about Northwestern Medicine, please visit our website at [nm.org](http://nm.org).

*Para asistencia en español, por favor llamar al Departamento de Representantes para Pacientes al 312.926.3112.*

The entities that come together as Northwestern Medicine are committed to representing the communities we serve, fostering a culture of inclusion, delivering culturally competent care, providing access to treatment and programs in a nondiscriminatory manner and eliminating healthcare disparities. For questions, please call either Northwestern Memorial Hospital’s Patient Representatives Department at 312.926.3112, TDD/TTY 312.926.6363 or the Northwestern Medical Group Patient Representatives Department at 312.695.1100, TDD/TTY 312.926.6363.

Developed by: NMH Cardiac Catheterization Laboratory