Cardiac Catheterization Lab Procedures: After Hospital Care

After your cardiac catheterization, the following information will help you in your recovery. Be sure to follow all instructions. Your clinician will check any boxes that provide additional instructions for you.

Activity

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

- On the day of discharge, limit your activities.
- No driving for 24 hours.
- Showering is permitted the following day.
- No tub baths for 1 week.
- For the first 2 days, climb stairs (as needed) with a slow, steady pace.

You may resume your usual activities the day after discharge, including normal social activities, but:

- No strenuous physical exercise for 1 week (such as tennis, running, swimming, golfing, weight lifting, bicycling).
- No sexual activity for 1 week.
- No heavy lifting (greater than 10 pounds) for 1 week if your puncture site was in your groin.

- In addition, if your puncture site was in your wrist:
  - Do not bend your wrist for 24 hours.
  - Do not soak the wrist for 3 days (in a bath tub, sink or for other cleaning).
  - Do not lift more than 3 to 5 pounds with your affected wrist for 1 week.

Fluids

- You should drink at least 6 glasses of water (8 oz. each) over the next 24 hours unless instructed otherwise. Water helps to clear the “dye” used during the procedure from your body.
Medications

☐ If you usually take Metformin or any other diabetes medication containing Metformin (such as Glucophage®, Janumet®), do not take this medicine for at least 48 hours after your procedure. The doctor or nurse from the Cath Lab will let you know when you can resume. Until then, follow your doctor’s advice about caring for your diabetes (diet, other medicines, and monitoring of your blood sugar levels). Contact the doctor (who manages your diabetes) if there are any changes in your diabetes control.

☐ If you usually take blood thinner medicine, you will be instructed as to when you can start taking it again.

Wound Care and Healing

After the procedure, a Band-aid® is applied to the wound site. The day after the procedure you may remove the Band-aid® with soap and water. Do not put on a new Band-aid®.

Keep the site clean and dry. Do not use any lotions, ointments, or powders at the wound site for 1 week.

The healing wound should remain soft and dry. A bruise (black and blue) or a marble-size lump may be present.

Warning Signs and Symptoms

Chest Pain/and Other Symptoms

Please notify your doctor RIGHT AWAY if you have:

- Chest discomfort or pain (angina) that radiates to the neck, jaw or arm.
- New symptoms or a change in your pattern of angina.
- Nausea or profuse sweating.
- Shortness of breath with exertion.
- An irregular heartbeat.
- Lightheadedness or dizziness that makes you lie down.
- A fainting spell.
- Calf tenderness or pain.
- Swelling of the ankle or foot.

Call 911 or go to the nearest emergency room if you have:

- Chest discomfort or pain lasting longer than 10 minutes and not relieved by taking 1 nitroglycerin tablet under the tongue.
- Frequent, recurring episodes of chest discomfort or pain.
Wound Changes
Please notify the Cardiac Cath Lab doctor if any of the following signs appear:
- Redness, swelling or color changes around the wound.
- Drainage from the wound.
- A lump at the wound site that gets bigger or is larger than marble size.
- Numbness, tingling, or coolness in the area around the wound, as well as the:
  - Thigh or leg
  - Wrist or arm
  - Neck
- Pain at the wound site that makes it hard to:
  - Walk
  - Turn your head
  - Use your hand or arm for light, non-strenuous activities

☐ Minor Bleeding (Venous)
If you notice minor bleeding or oozing from the puncture wound, please do the following:
- Immediately lie flat if the wound is in your groin.
- Apply firm pressure just above the puncture site and hold for 15 minutes. You may use a clean cloth or tissue to apply pressure. If possible, have another person apply the pressure.
- After 15 minutes remove pressure. The wound should be dry and flat, without bleeding. If the wound is in your groin, you should continue to lie flat for about 1 hour before getting up and walking.
- Cover the wound with a Band-aid®. Notify your doctor of this incident.

Call 911 or go to the nearest emergency room if:
- Minor bleeding lasts for more than 15 minutes.
- Swelling occurs which seems to be increasing.

☐ Arterial Bleeding
This occurs when the blood vessel (artery) used during the procedure has re-opened. Although rare, it is an emergency requiring immediate medical attention.
- If the puncture is in your groin, immediately lie flat and apply firm pressure to stop the bleeding.
- If the puncture is in your wrist, press firmly on the site with your thumb while supporting your wrist with your other fingers.
Call 911 or go to the nearest emergency room if you have:

- Swelling around the wound which quickly increases or is pulsating.
- A lot of blood or a jet of blood pumping out of the puncture site. Either one of these may occur suddenly.

Cath Lab Contact

Please call if you have a problem or question. Don’t hesitate!

**Weekdays:** 312.926.CATH (2284), extension #3.
**Weekends, Evenings and Holidays:** Ask for the Cath Lab Physician on-call.

Northwestern Medicine – Health Information Resources

For more information, contact Northwestern Memorial Hospital’s Alberto Culver Health Learning Center (HLC) at hlc@nm.org, or by calling 312.926.5465. You may also visit the HLC on the 3rd floor, Galter Pavilion at 251 E. Huron St., Chicago, IL. 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.