

*If you have any questions or concerns, please call 312.926.2284 (312.926.CATH)*

## 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 or armpit:
- Do not bend your wrist for 24 hours if the puncture site is in your wrist.
  - Do not soak the puncture site for 3 days (in a bathtub, sink or for other cleaning).
  - Do not lift more than **3 to 5** pounds with your affected arm for 1 week.
- Use the sling for the first 24 hours. Avoid raising your arm above your shoulder for 1 week.

### Fluids

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

## Medications

Please review the medications listed on your After Visit Summary provided by the discharging nurse. Depending on the results of your procedure, your doctor may prescribe new medications. Please make sure you understand what medications you should be taking after the procedure and how often to take them.

If you usually take blood-thinning medication, you may resume \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## 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 mark) or a marble-size lump may be present.

## Warning signs and symptoms

### ***Chest pain and other symptoms***

Please notify your physician **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 physician 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 physician of this incident.

### ***Call 911 or go to the nearest emergency room if:***

- Minor bleeding lasts for more than 15 minutes.
- Swelling occurs and 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.
- If the puncture is in your armpit, apply firm pressure to stop the bleeding and hug your arm to the side of your chest.

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

- Swelling around the wound that 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.

## **Follow-up appointments**

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### **Cath Lab contact**

Please call if you have a problem or question.

**Weekdays:** 312.926.2284 (312.926.CATH), extension 3.

**Weekends, evenings and holidays:** Call 312.926.2284 and 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](mailto: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](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