

## After Your Left Heart Catheterization Femoral (Groin) Approach

### *Self-care after your procedure*

*This handout gives self-care instructions for you to follow after your left heart catheterization procedure.*

### Activity

- For the **rest of the day** after your procedure:
  - Rest quietly at home
  - Do **not** drive for 24 hours
  - If you had any sedation, see page 2
- **Starting 24 hours after you are discharged** from your procedure, you may:
  - Shower
  - Return to light activity
  - Drive
- For **48 hours** after your procedure:
  - Do **not** do anything that puts stress on your puncture site. This includes housework, gardening, and many self-care tasks. Ask for help with any tasks that need to be done during this time.
  - You may go up and down stairs, but limit how much you do this.
- For **7 days** after your procedure:
  - Do **NOT** lift more than 10 pounds (4.54 kilograms). A gallon of milk weighs almost 9 pounds. This includes pets, groceries, children, trash, and laundry.
  - Do **NOT** hold your breath, bear down, or strain when having a bowel movement.
  - Do **NOT** allow the puncture site to be covered by water. This means do not take a bath, sit in a hot tub, or go swimming.



*Talk with your cardiologist if you have any questions or concerns about your recovery time.*

## If You Had ANY Sedation

Sedation can make you sleepy, and make it hard for you to think clearly. Because of this:

- **A responsible adult must take you home after your procedure.** You may not take a bus, shuttle, taxi, or any other transportation by yourself.
- **For 24 hours after your procedure:**
  - Do **NOT** drive.
  - Make sure you have a responsible adult who can help you as needed during this time.
  - Do **NOT** be responsible for the care of anyone else, such as children, pets, or an adult who needs care.
  - Do **NOT** drink alcohol or take drugs other than the ones your doctors prescribed or suggested.
  - Do **NOT** make important decisions or sign legal papers.

## Pain Control

You will most likely be sore for 1 to 2 days at the puncture site where the catheter was inserted.

- You may take acetaminophen (Tylenol) to relieve pain. Follow the dose instructions on the package.
- For **5 days** after your procedure, do **not** take anti-inflammatories such as ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin) or naproxen (Aleve, Naprosyn). They may cause bleeding.
- If your doctor prescribed aspirin for your heart, you may take it as usual. But do **not** take extra aspirin for pain control.

If pain at your puncture site is not eased by acetaminophen, call 206.598.6190 and ask to page the Cardiology I Fellow on call.

## Site Care

- Keep the puncture site clean and dry.
- You may remove the dressing or bandage 24 hours after your procedure.
- After you remove the dressing, gently clean the site with mild soap and water. Do **not** scrub or rub the area. Pat dry with a clean towel.
- For the next 3 days, watch for signs of infection. Call the cardiologist who did your procedure if you see:
  - Redness around the site
  - Fever higher than 101.5°F (38.6°C)
  - Drainage at the site

- You may have a bruise where the catheter was inserted. It may spread down your leg. It may take 2 to 3 weeks for the bruise to go away.

## When to Call for Help

**If you have sudden, heavy bleeding or a lot of swelling that you cannot control, apply firm pressure to the site and call 911.**

Call 206.598.6190 and ask to page the Cardiology I Fellow on call if you have:

- **Drainage** from the site
- A lot of **redness** around the site

## Bleeding

If you have light or moderate bleeding or swelling at the site:

- **Use clean fingers to apply pressure on it for 10 minutes.**
- If bleeding does not stop or swelling does not go down in 10 minutes, **call 911 right away.** Keep applying pressure until help arrives.

## Other Concerns

Call the cardiologist who did your procedure if you have:

- Any of these signs of infection:
  - Redness
  - Fever higher than 101.5°F (38.6°C)
  - Drainage
  - Change in the bruise or lump
- **Severe pain** that is not relieved by acetaminophen (Tylenol)

## Medicines After Your Procedure

- If you had a stent placed, you will take:
  - Aspirin to prevent blood clots in the artery where the stent was placed.
  - A blood-thinning medicine similar to aspirin that will help prevent blood clots. One of these is called clopidogrel (Plavix), but your cardiologist may prescribe a similar medicine with a different name.
- Resume all heart medicines you were taking before your procedure. Your primary cardiologist will review your medicines at your follow-up visit within 2 to 4 weeks after your procedure.

- For minor pain, you may take acetaminophen (Tylenol), either regular (325 mg) or extra strength (500 mg). Do not take more than 4 gm (4,000 mg) in a 24-hour period.
- Keep taking your other prescribed medicines unless your doctor tells you otherwise.

## Follow-up Care

- Schedule a follow-up visit with your heart doctor (cardiologist) or primary care provider (PCP). **Be sure to keep this appointment.** Follow-up visits are usually 2 to 4 weeks after you leave the hospital.
- If you had a stent placed, the artery in your heart can become blocked again after the procedure. Watch for the same symptoms that you had before the procedure. Call your doctor right away if your symptoms return.

## Questions?

Your questions are important. Call your doctor or healthcare provider if you have questions or concerns.

- **For general questions:**  
Weekdays from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., call the Regional Heart Center at 206.598.4300.
- **For questions related to your procedure:**  
Weekdays from 6:30 a.m. to 8 p.m., call Cardiac Procedures at 206.598.7146. Ask to talk with a nurse.
- **For urgent concerns related to your procedure,** or if it is after hours or on a weekend or holiday: Call 206.598.6190 and ask to page the Cardiology I fellow on call.