Activities of Daily Living After Your Heart Procedure

Important precautions and guidelines

This handout gives important guidelines to follow to help your healing and keep you safe after your procedure.

Your Procedure
You recently had this procedure:
- Transfemoral valve replacement
- Transapical valve replacement
- Mitral clip procedure
- Cardiac catheterization

Type: __________________

General Precautions
Follow these precautions for:

How long: _______________

For Your Safety
- Do not lift anything that weighs more than 5 to 10 pounds (a gallon of milk weighs almost 9 pounds). This includes grocery bags, laundry baskets, babies, and pets. Ask for help as needed.
- Do not hold your breath or strain or bear down while getting up or having a bowel movement.

Bathing
- You may shower. Gently clean your incision with soap and water and gently pat to dry. Do not rub or scrub.
- Do not soak in a bath tub or hot tub or go swimming.
- Do not apply any lotion or powder on your incision site.
- If it is hard for you to shower, your occupational therapist (OT) may advise you to use tools such as a shower chair, a hand-held shower head, a non-skid mat, a long-handled sponge, or a grab bar.
Getting Dressed

- To keep from falling, sit down to get dressed.
- If it is hard for you to put on your underwear, pants, socks, and shoes, your OT may advise you to use tools such as a reacher, dressing stick, sock aid, and long-handled shoehorn.

Extra Instructions

- **Transapical Valve Replacement**
  If you had a transapical valve replacement, follow all instructions listed under “General Precautions.”
  Also follow these guidelines for 2 weeks when using your arm that is on the same side as your surgery (your surgical arm):
  - Do not lift your elbow above your shoulder.
  - Do not reach behind you when bathing, toileting, or putting on or taking off your clothes. Use your non-surgical arm.

- **Radial Artery Access**
  If you had your radial artery accessed for your procedure, follow all instructions listed under “General Precautions.”
  Also follow these guidelines when using your arm that is on the same side as your surgery (your surgical arm):
  - For 48 hours, do not lift, push, or pull anything.
  - For 5 days, do not lift anything that weighs more than 5 pounds. (A 2-liter bottle of water weighs almost 5 pounds.)