After Your Electrical Cardioversion

Self-care at home

This handout gives important self-care instructions for you to follow at home after your electrical cardioversion.

For Your Safety

For 6 Hours After Your Procedure

- **Do not stay alone** for at least 6 hours after your last dose of *anesthesia*. This is the medicine you were given to block pain and help you relax during your procedure. Be sure to have a responsible adult nearby during this time.

For 24 Hours After Your Procedure

Because the anesthesia you received affects your thinking and reaction time, for 24 hours after your procedure:

- **Do not drive**.
- **Do not** be responsible for the care of another person.
- **Do not** use machinery.
- **Do not** sign important papers or make important decisions.

Activity

- You may return to normal light activity.
- Ask your primary cardiology provider when you can resume vigorous exercise.

Medicines

- Resume all of your regular medicines, unless your healthcare provider tells you otherwise.
- Follow your provider’s instructions about taking *anticoagulation* (blood-thinning) medicines.

Ask your primary cardiology provider when you can resume vigorous exercise.
Bathing
You may shower or take a bath at any time.

Skin Care
• Keep your skin clean and dry.
• If your skin becomes very irritated from the defibrillator pads, tell your primary care provider. Skin irritation should go away in a few days.

Eating
Return to eating your normal foods as you are able.

When to Call
Call your primary care provider if you have:
• Chills
• Nausea or vomiting that will not stop
• Itching or rash
• A hard time urinating, or if you cannot urinate
Also call your primary cardiology provider if your symptoms of atrial fibrillation (fast, unsteady heart beat) or atrial flutter (fast, but steady, heart beat) are returning. Some of these symptoms are:
• Shortness of breath
• Fatigue
• Pulse change

Who to Call
• If you have an urgent need, call 911.
• If you have cardiology questions during business hours, call the Regional Heart Center at 206.598.4300.
• If you have questions or concerns about your procedure, please call the Interventional Cardiac Recovery Unit (ICRU) at 206.598.7146, weekdays from 6:30 a.m. to 8 p.m.

Follow-up Care
• Keep taking your prescribed medicines unless your doctor tells you otherwise.
• Follow up with your primary care provider after your procedure, as instructed.