After Your Left Heart Catheterization (Femoral or Groin Approach)

Self-care after your procedure

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

Activity

For the rest of the day after your procedure:

- Rest quietly at home
- Do not drive

24 hours after your discharge after your procedure, you may:

- Return to light activity
- Drive
- Shower

For 48 hours after your procedure:

- Avoid strenuous activity, such as housework, gardening, or any self-care tasks that you can postpone.
- It is OK to walk up and down stairs, but limit how much stair climbing you do.

For 5 days after your procedure:

- Do not lift more than 5 pounds (2.3 kilograms). A 2-liter bottle of soda weighs about 4½ pounds.
- Do not take a bath, sit in a hot tub, or go swimming.

Pain

- You will most likely be sore for 1 to 2 days where the catheter was inserted. You may take acetaminophen (Tylenol) to relieve pain. Follow the dosing instructions on the package.

Talk with your cardiologist if you have any questions or concerns about your procedure.
• Take your regular aspirin as prescribed for your heart, but do not take other products that contain aspirin.

• Do not take other anti-inflammatories such as ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin) or naproxen (Aleve, Naprosyn). They may cause bleeding.

• If you have a lot of pain or swelling at the catheter site, call the cardiologist who did your procedure.

### Site Care

• You may remove the dressing or bandage 24 hours after your procedure.

• Keep the area clean and dry.

• For the next 3 days, watch for these signs of infection:
  - 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 might spread down your leg over the next day. It may take 2 to 6 weeks for the bruise to go away.

• If you have swelling or blood oozing where the catheter was inserted, use your fingers to put pressure on the area. If the swelling or oozing does not stop after 10 minutes, keep pressure on the site and call the cardiologist who did your test.

### When to Call for Help

If you have heavy bleeding or a lot of swelling, put pressure on the site and call 9-1-1.

Call the cardiologist who did your procedure if you have:

• **Swelling or blood oozing** where the catheter was inserted, that does not stop after you apply pressure for 10 minutes.

• **Drainage from the site or a lot of redness around it.**

• **Severe pain** that is not relieved by Tylenol.

### Follow-up Care

• Continue taking your prescribed medicines unless you are told otherwise.

• 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 6 p.m.