

Activities of Daily Living After Your Heart Procedure

Important precautions and guidelines

UW Medicine
UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON
MEDICAL CENTER

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

Your Procedure

You recently had this procedure:

- Transfemoral valve replacement
- Transapical valve replacement
- Mitral clip procedure
- Cardiac catheterization

Type: _____

General Precautions

Follow these precautions until: _____

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 bathtub or hot tub or go swimming until your provider tells you it is okay.
- Do **not** apply any lotion or powder on your incision site.
- If it is hard for you to shower, your occupational therapist (OT) may suggest you use tools such as a shower chair, a hand-held shower head, a non-skid mat, a long-handled sponge, or a grab bar.



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Getting Dressed

- Sit down to get dressed to avoid falling.
- If it is hard for you to put on your underwear, pants, socks, and shoes, your OT may suggest you 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, using the toilet, or putting on or taking off your clothes. Use your non-surgical arm.

After heart surgery, be very careful about how you use your arms.

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.)

Questions?

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

Occupational Therapy:
206.598.4830

5-Southeast CCU: 206.598.6500