

# After Your Cardiac Electrophysiology Ablation

## *Self-care after your procedure*

*You had a cardiac electrophysiology ablation today. This handout gives care instructions for you to follow for the next few days.*

### Same-Day Discharge

If you are going home the same day as your procedure, a doctor or nurse practitioner will check your insertion site before you leave the hospital. They will also talk with you about the results of your procedure.

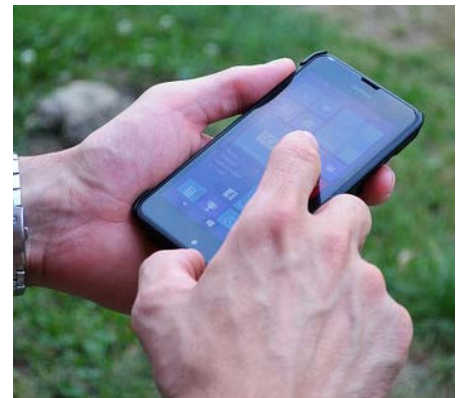
For the next 24 hours:

- Rest quietly at home.
- Do **not** drive.

### For Your Safety

You had anesthesia or sedation for this procedure. This medicine can make you drowsy and make it hard for you to think clearly. Because of this:

- **A responsible adult must take you home.** You may not take a bus, shuttle, taxi, or any other transportation by yourself.
- **For the next 24 hours:**
  - Do **NOT** drive.
  - Make sure you have a responsible adult who can help you if 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.



*If you have questions after you go home, call one of the numbers on the last page of this handout.*

## Next-Day Discharge

If you spent the night in the hospital after your procedure, your doctor will come to your room and check on your insertion site before you leave the hospital. They will also talk with you about the results of your procedure. Please ask questions if you do not understand something your doctor or nurse tells you.

## Activity

- **Starting 24 hours after you are discharged**, you may:
  - Return to light activity
  - Drive
  - Shower, but leave the dressings on while showering. After you shower for the first time, you may take the dressings off. You do not need to apply more dressing.
- 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 anything that weighs 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.
  - Avoid sexual activity.
  - Do **not** go hiking, bicycling, jogging, or running.
- **Slowly** increase your activity level over the next week. Start at about half your activity level before your ablation. Slowly build up from there.

## 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.
- If your doctor prescribed aspirin for your heart, you may take it as usual. But do **not** take extra aspirin for pain control.

- **For 5 days after your procedure:** Do **not** take anti-inflammatories such as ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin) or naproxen (Aleve, Naprosyn). They may cause increased bleeding.
- If your pain at the puncture site is not eased by acetaminophen, and it is during clinic hours (weekdays, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.), call the Electrophysiology (EP) nurse. After hours and on weekends and holidays, call 206.598.6190. Ask to page the Cardiology E Fellow on call.

## Site Care

- You may remove the dressing or bandage 24 hours after your ablation.
- Keep the catheter site clean and dry.
- For the next 3 days, watch for signs of infection. Call the cardiologist who did your procedure if you see:
  - Redness at the site
  - Fever higher than 100.4°F (38.0°C)
  - Drainage from the site
- You may have a bruise where the catheter was inserted. It may spread down your leg. It may take 2 to 6 weeks for the bruise to go away.
- **If you have swelling or bleeding at the puncture site:**
  - **Use your fingers or a fist to put pressure on the area.**
  - If swelling or bleeding does not stop after 10 minutes, keep pressure on the site. Call your EP nurse if it is during clinic hours (weekdays, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.). After hours and on weekends and holidays, call 206.598.6190. Ask to page the Cardiology E Fellow on call.

## Medicines

- If you stopped taking any blood-thinning medicines such as warfarin (Coumadin), clopidogrel (Plavix), dabigatran (Pradaxa), rivaroxaban (Xarelto), apixaban (Eliquis), or edoxaban (Savaysa), you may start taking it again the night of your procedure, unless your doctor who prescribed it tells you otherwise.
- Take your other medicines as usual after your procedure.

## When to Call for Help

Problems after this procedure are rare, but tell us right away if you have any of these symptoms so that we can follow-up as needed.

**If you have sudden, heavy bleeding or a lot of swelling, put pressure on the site and call 911.**

**Over the next 7 days:** If it is during clinic hours (weekdays, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.) call the EP nurse directly, or call the Regional Heart Center (206.598.4300) and ask to speak to your doctor's nurse if you have:

- Fever higher than 100.4°F (38.0°C)
- Chest pain
- Feelings of being dizzy or lightheaded
- Any signs of infection at the puncture site or the IV site:
  - Swelling
  - Bleeding
  - Redness
  - Increased tenderness
- Nervous system changes:
  - Problems thinking
  - Slurred speech
  - Numbness or tingling in your face, arms, or legs
- Shortness of breath that is new or different

## 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 your EP nurse.
- **If you cannot reach your EP nurse**, weekdays from 6:30 a.m. to 8 p.m., call Cardiac Procedures at 206.598.7146. Ask to speak 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 E Fellow on call.

## Urgent Concerns

After hours and on weekends and holidays, call **206.598.6190** and ask to page the Cardiology E Fellow on call 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 acetaminophen (Tylenol)

## Follow-up Care

- Keep taking your prescribed medicines unless your provider tells you otherwise.
- If you have questions or concerns about your procedure, please call your EP nurse.
- Follow up with your primary care provider as instructed.