

Microwave Maze Procedure

The Maze Procedure

You may have the maze procedure to try to stop atrial fibrillation (AFib). AFib is an abnormal heart rhythm. The signals that cause AFib come from the top of the heart. We use a catheter to burn a path around the top of the heart, and when it heals, a scar forms. This scar stops the electrical signals that cause the heart to beat in an AFib rhythm. You can have the maze procedure with a planned open-heart surgery or alone as a less invasive surgery.

In planned open-heart surgery, the doctor makes a cut along your sternum (breastbone).

As a stand-alone surgery, the doctor makes two small cuts in the side of the chest, below the arm pit.

Treatment

This may help patients who:

- Do not have a clot in one of the chambers of their heart.
- Take medicine that does not help or fix their AFib.
- Have allergies or side effects to certain medicines.
- Cannot take blood thinners.
- Your provider will decide if this surgery is right for you.

Length of Surgery

This can vary from patient to patient. The stand-alone surgery may take 2 to 4 hours. Open heart surgery varies based on the other procedures.

After Surgery

- You will go to the cardiac surgery unit.
- Your length of stay depends on the type of surgery you had.
- You will have a chest tube coming out near the incision in both sides of your chest. These tubes help keep the lungs inflated. You will be given oxygen.
- You will have IV lines, a blood pressure cuff, and monitor.
- You will take medicines to control your heart rhythm. You may also take medicines to thin your blood.

Going Home

- You will have a bandage over your chest wounds for a day or two. Then the wounds will be open to air. Your nurse will teach you how to care for these.
- You cannot drive for 2 weeks for the stand-alone surgery and 6 weeks for open heart surgery. You cannot drive if you are taking narcotic pain medicines.
- You cannot lift heavy objects for 3 weeks for the stand-alone surgery or 4-6 weeks after open heart surgery.
- Take your medicine to control AFib. Your doctor will tell you to stop taking this once your heart converts to a normal rhythm.

Activity

Being active will help build strength and prevent problems. Walking and arm exercises are great ways to stay active. Many patients are in AFib after surgery. Your heart should convert to a normal rhythm within 6 months.

Follow-Up Care

You will follow-up with both your cardiologist and the cardiac surgeon.

Your health care team may have given you this information as part of your care. If so, please use it and call if you have any questions. If this information was not given to you as part of your care, please check with your doctor. This is not medical advice. This is not to be used for diagnosis or treatment of any medical condition. Because each person's health needs are different, you should talk with your doctor or others on your health care team when using this information. If you have an emergency, please call 911. Copyright © 11/2022 University of Wisconsin Hospitals and Clinics Authority. All rights reserved. Produced by the Department of Nursing. HF#6510