

Home Care After Cardiac Catheterization/Arterial Angiography

Follow these instructions for your care at home after your procedure.

You had a cardiac catheterization on _____ through the:

Right / Left
Brachial artery / Radial artery

Going Home

You will need to have someone drive you home after your procedure.

Do not drive, operate heavy machinery, drink alcohol, or make any important decisions until the next day if you took medicine to help you relax.

Rest quietly for the rest of the day. You can use the arm and hand with the puncture site for normal daily activities.

Care of the Puncture Site

You may shower after 24 hours. Remove the bandage over the puncture site before you shower.

For the next 3 days:

- Gently clean the site using soap and water while in the shower. Gently dry the site. **Do not** rub the site.
- Cover the site with a band-aid or dressing. Cover the entire area.
- Keep the site clean and dry to prevent infection. If the band-aid or dressing becomes wet, remove it and replace it with a new one.
- Inspect the site daily for signs of infection.

Signs of Infection

- Redness, swelling or drainage at the site.
- Pain that doesn't go away.
- Fever over 100.4°F for two readings taken 4 hours apart.
- A red streak going towards your elbow or upper arm.

Activities

- **Do not** lift more than 10 pounds for 1 week or until it has healed.
- **Do not** golf, do carpentry, go bowling, play tennis or do any other vigorous arm activity for 1 week.
- **Do not** soak your wound in a bathtub, hot tub, or swimming pool for 1 week or until the site has healed.
- You can cook, type, clean, and drive, if able, the day after you go home.
- Elevate your arm overnight and while resting for the first 2-3 days to prevent swelling of your hand.
- You may return to work on _____

What to Expect

- Mild soreness or tenderness at the site or forearm that may last 1 week.
- Bruising at the site that may take 2-3 weeks to go away.
- A small lump (dime to quarter size) which may last up to 6 weeks.

Pain Control

- You may take acetaminophen (Tylenol®) 325mg tablets every 4-6 hours.
- You may put an ice pack or warm pack over the site for 20 minutes every 2 hours. Gently wipe the site after you remove the pack if it is wet.

Medicine

Take your current medicines as prescribed. Tell your doctor of any side effects.

If you had a stent placed in your heart, you **must** take one of the following:

- Plavix® (clopidogrel)
- Effient® (prasugrel)
- Brilinta® (ticagrelor)

Before you go home, **make sure** you have a prescription for one of these medicines. If you are not able to pay for this medicine, tell your nurse or pharmacist.

Do not stop taking any medicine without talking to your doctor.

Follow Up

See your After Visit Summary or After Hospital Care Plan to find out about your medicines, lab tests and follow up visits.

When to Call

Call your doctor right away if you have:

- Signs of infection
- Severe pain
- Numbness or tingling in the arm or hand of the puncture site

Call 911 if you have:

- Bleeding that does not stop after 10 minutes of constant pressure. **Keep pressure on the site until help arrives.**
- Your hand becomes cold, turns blue or you have severe pain.
- Heart symptoms that have not gone away 15 minutes after lying down or taking nitroglycerin (if prescribed). Heart symptoms include:
 - Chest, arm, neck, back or belly pain or pressure
 - Heavy sweating
 - Shortness of breath or breathing problems

Who to Call

UW Heart and Vascular Care Clinic
Weekdays, 8 am to 5 pm
(608) 263-1530

After hours, weekends and holidays, the paging operator will answer this number. Ask for the cardiac doctor on call. Give your name and phone number with the area code. The doctor will call you back.

The toll-free number is **1-800-323-8942**.

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 © 3/2025 University of Wisconsin Hospitals and Clinics Authority. All rights reserved. Produced by the Department of Nursing. HF#5691