

Cardiac Catheterization: Care at Home

You have had a cardiac catheterization (“cardiac cath”). At the end of the procedure, one of these methods was used to stop the bleeding from the cath site:

- **Holding pressure:** Pressure is put on the site to prevent bleeding until a clot forms.
- **Perclose:** A stitch is placed in the artery or vein to prevent bleeding. The stitch will dissolve in 2 to 3 months.

The Day of the Procedure

You will feel sleepy from the anesthesia or sedation medicine for a few hours. Limit your activities for the rest of the day.

- No driving, skateboarding, bicycling or operating machinery.
- No products (drinks or food) that contain caffeine or alcohol.
- **No smoking**, chewing tobacco or taking any form of nicotine for at least 24 hours after the procedure.

Care of the Cath Site

You may have some soreness at the cath site for about one week. Bruising can last for 2 weeks. If there is a lump under the skin (hematoma), it can last for up to 6 weeks.

- Remove the dressing after 24 hours. You may apply a Band-Aid® daily for 1 to 2 days.
- Keep the site clean and dry. Wash gently with mild soap and water.
- No tub baths, swimming pools or hot tubs for 3 days. You may take a shower or sponge bath.

Activity

You may resume your normal activity after 1 day unless the cardiologist, or cardiology nurse practitioner, tells you otherwise.

When to Call the Cardiologist

Call your cardiologist if any of these things occur:

- You have an oral temperature higher than 101.5°F for 24 hours. (If coils were placed, you can expect to have a fever for the first 24 hours. You may take Tylenol[®] (acetaminophen) or Advil[®] or Motrin[®] (ibuprofen) for fever.
- Bleeding or oozing of blood from the cath site. If this happens, you should lie flat. Apply pressure for 20 minutes. If the bleeding cannot be controlled with pressure, call 911.
- Increased swelling or a new lump develops at the cath site.
- Pain, numbness, tingling, coolness, loss of feeling or change in color or temperature in one leg compared to the other leg.
- Redness, swelling, drainage or warmth at the cath site.
- Chest pain especially after devices such as ASD or PFO have been placed in the heart. Chest pain may be expected after some procedures like angioplasty or coil or stent placement. However, an echocardiogram may be needed to rule out fluid around the heart.