



# Going Home after Cardiac Catheterization (Femoral Approach)

You have had a cardiac catheterization procedure through your groin (Femoral Approach). This handout will help you learn how to care for yourself at home. Please read this information before you go home.

## Care of the puncture site

- Your puncture site will be covered with a bandage. It can be removed after 24 hours.
- Check the puncture site every day for signs of infection e.g. increased redness, swelling, tenderness, drainage, fever.
- You may have a small lump at the puncture site. This is normal. The lump will get smaller and go away over the next 4 to 8 weeks.
- You may have bruising near the puncture site. It may extend down the inside of the leg as you walk around more. This will go away in a few weeks. Tell your doctor if the bruising becomes hard or firm.
- Doctors sometimes implant a device to help close the puncture site. If this applies to you, your nurse will give you a separate pamphlet and Patient Information Card.

## Bathing

- You may shower after 24 hours. Remove the bandage before showering. You can put on another bandage after your shower, if you wish.
- While standing in the shower, gently clean the site daily with soap and water. Dry the area gently. Do not apply powders or lotions.
- Do not use a hot tub, tub bath or swim for 5 days or until the site has healed.

## Activity

- It is common for the puncture site to be sore and tender for about 1 week. Tell your doctor if the pain gets worse.
- You can go for easy walks unless your doctor has told you not to.
- Avoid stair climbing for 24 hours. If you must climb stairs, climb them slowly.
- Avoid kneeling or crouching for 3 days.
- Resume sexual activity after 3 days.
- Avoid lifting anything over 10 pounds (4.5 kilograms) for 1 week or until the site heals.
- Avoid strenuous exercise, such as running, cycling or swimming, for 1 week.
- You may drive after 2 days unless you have had a recent heart attack or TAVI procedure. If so, ask your cardiologist (heart doctor) when you can drive.
- Ask your doctor when you can go back to work. It will depend on if you have had a recent heart attack or if you have a physical job.

**If you had medication to calm you (sedation) during your procedure, you may be considered impaired for up to 24 hours after.**

### **You should not:**

- Make important decisions or sign documents
- Work with machinery or do business
- Travel alone by public transport e.g. bus, taxi
- Drink alcohol; take sleeping pills or anti-anxiety medication
- Be responsible for the care of another person e.g. baby, small child, person in poor health

## Your medications

- If your groin aches, rest and take acetaminophen (Tylenol® or Tylenol® products) as needed.
- Restart all your usual medications unless your doctor tells you not to.
- Fill any new prescriptions and follow directions.

## Call 911 if you have:

- Bleeding from the puncture site that you cannot stop by doing the following:

Relax and lie down right away. Keep your leg flat and have someone apply firm pressure to the site using their fingers and a gauze pad. Keep the pressure on for 20 minutes. If the bleeding stops cover the site with a sterile bandage, continue to lay flat and keep your leg still for a few hours. If the bleeding does not stop, stay flat and continue to hold pressure. Have someone call 911 and tell the ambulance you have had a cardiac procedure.

## What to do about chest pain:

- You may have some chest discomfort after your procedure. This is not uncommon and can be related to the procedure. It usually passes within 24 hours.
- Chest discomfort should go away with rest and nitroglycerine spray. Use 1 spray every 5 minutes until the discomfort is gone or until you have taken 3 sprays. **Do not take more than 3 sprays in 15 minutes.** If chest discomfort is **not relieved with 3 sprays** of nitroglycerine in 15 minutes, call 911.
- Be sure to tell your cardiologist/specialist if you have frequent episodes of chest discomfort that get better with nitroglycerine spray.

## **Call your family doctor or go to the closest Emergency Department right away if you have:**

- Severe pain, swelling, firmness, numbness, tingling, coldness, or bluish color to your puncture site or leg.
- A lump at the puncture site that pulsates (throbs). This may be a sign of a problem with the artery. Loosely cover the lump with a bandage but **do not apply pressure**.
- Increased redness or drainage at the puncture site.
- High-grade fever (38.5C/101.3F and over) for 2 days or more.
- Low-grade fever (37.5C-37.9C or 98.5F-101.2F) for more than 3 days.

## **For non-emergency health information and services:**

**HealthLinkBC** -Health advice you can trust 24/7.

Tel: 8.1.1 from anywhere in BC.

Tel: 7.1.1 for deaf and hearing-impaired assistance (TTY)

Web: [www.HealthLinkBC.ca](http://www.HealthLinkBC.ca)

## **Follow-up**

Your cardiologist will give you written information about your follow-up appointments.

**The information in this handout is intended only for the person it was given to by the health care team. It does not replace the advice or directions given to you by your doctor.**