








# Care After Heart Surgery — At a Glance

## For an Emergency, Call 911

<p><b>Activity</b></p> 	<p><b>Procedure Site Care</b></p> 	<p><b>Medicines</b></p> 	<p><b>Self-care</b></p> 	<p><b>When to Call for Help</b></p> 
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Follow your walking schedule.</li> <li>■ Don't get too tired. Be sure to rest.</li> <li>■ Try not to sleep more than 1 hour at a time during the day.</li> <li>■ Don't lift more than 10 pounds or overuse your arms until your doctor says it's OK.</li> <li>■ Stop what you are doing if you are short of breath or if you have chest discomfort. Rest until you feel better.</li> <li>■ Sexual activity puts the same demand on your heart as walking up 2 flights of stairs. Talk with your doctor if you have concerns.</li> </ul> <p><b>Allina Health</b> </p> <p><small>© 2022 ALLINA HEALTH SYSTEM. TM – A TRADEMARK OF ALLINA HEALTH SYSTEM. OTHER TRADEMARKS USED ARE OWNED BY THEIR RESPECTIVE OWNERS. THIS FACT SHEET DOES NOT REPLACE MEDICAL OR PROFESSIONAL ADVICE. IT IS ONLY A GUIDE. cvs-ah-46140 (6/14)</small></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Check your incision every morning.</li> <li>■ It is normal to have: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— drainage that is clear, watery and straw-colored</li> <li>— mild swelling, bruising, itchiness, soreness and numbness for 4 to 6 weeks.</li> </ul> </li> <li>■ Keep a bandage over your chest tube sites until a scab forms or any drainage stops.</li> <li>■ Change the bandage twice a day.</li> <li>■ Take a shower every day with a mild soap (such as Dial® or Ivory®).</li> <li>■ Don't put ointments, lotions, powders or gels on the incision site.</li> <li>■ Women who wear a bra cup C or greater should wear a bra as directed.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Get your prescriptions filled right away.</li> <li>■ Take the medicines you were prescribed in the hospital as directed.</li> <li>■ Talk with your health care provider before you take over-the-counter pain relief medicine.</li> <li>■ Call your pharmacy 1 week before you need a refill.</li> <li>■ If you are taking a prescription pain medicine, do not drive, do not operate heavy machinery and do not make important decisions.</li> </ul> <p><a href="http://allinahealth.org">allinahealth.org</a></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Talk with your doctor about when you can drive and go to work.</li> <li>■ Weigh yourself each morning before breakfast. Tell your doctor if you gain more than 3 pounds in 1 day or 5 pounds in 1 week.</li> <li>■ Relax and manage your stress.</li> <li>■ Talk about your feelings with a family member or friend. Talk with your doctor if you feel sad, depressed or nervous most of the time.</li> <li>■ <b>Do not use tobacco.</b> If you need help quitting, ask your doctor. </li> <li>■ Keep all follow-up appointments with your surgeon and primary care provider.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ <b>Call your surgeon if:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— your incision separates</li> <li>— you have signs of infection (redness, swelling, tenderness, warmth, change in appearance, more drainage)</li> <li>— you have a temperature higher than 101 F</li> <li>— you have drainage that is green, creamy or sticky, or drainage that lasts for more than 2 weeks.</li> </ul> </li> <li>■ <b>Call your primary care provider if you:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— gain more than 3 pounds in 1 day or 5 pounds in 1 week</li> <li>— have trouble breathing</li> <li>— are not sure about what you are feeling</li> <li>— have concerns.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>