

Going home after your coronary angioplasty

This leaflet explains what to expect and what to watch out for when you go home after your coronary angioplasty. However, if you have recently had a heart attack, you should discuss issues such as returning to work and driving with your doctor or nurse, as it is likely that you will need to wait longer before resuming them. If you have any questions or concerns please contact us using the details on the back page.

How should I care for my wound?

It is normal for your wound to be tender for a few days after the angioplasty. It is also normal for a bruise to develop.

However, if you notice any of the following please contact your GP:

- a hard, tender lump under the skin around the wound (a pea-sized lump is normal)
- any increase in pain, swelling, redness and/or discharge at the site
- a cold foot or hand on the same side as the procedure
- a raised temperature/fever.

If your wound starts to bleed you should apply pressure to the area:

- keeping your leg as straight as possible if your **groin** was used (lying down if you can):
- raise your hand across your chest if your **arm** was used.

If the bleeding does not stop **after 10 minutes**, dial 999. **Do not drive yourself to A&E.**

If the bleeding stops within 10 minutes, keep your leg or arm as still as possible for the following four hours. If bleeding re-starts, go to your A&E department. **Do not drive yourself to A&E.**

You can shower when you get home but avoid rubbing the wound site or having a bath for up to five days. Do not put creams, talcum powder or soap directly onto the site for up to a week after the procedure to avoid irritation and reduce the likelihood of infection.

Chest pain

Your chest is likely to feel tender after the procedure. This is normal and should settle within a few days. However if you experience severe chest pain or pain similar to your angina pain, use your GTN medicine as prescribed. **If your pain lasts longer than 10 minutes after using your GTN medicine, dial 999 or go to your nearest A&E. Do not drive yourself to A&E.**

Can I eat and drink as normal?

You can eat as usual. Drink plenty of fluids but avoid alcohol for 24 hours.

Resuming activities

You will usually be able to return to work within a week unless you have a manual job that involves heavy lifting. Check with your doctor or nurse when you can go back to work before leaving hospital. You can self certify but if you think that you will require a sick certificate, please contact your GP.

- Avoid heavy lifting and strenuous physical exercise (running, hill climbing, swimming and competitive sports) for at least five days.
- You are not allowed to drive for one week after the angioplasty. This is a requirement by the Driver Vehicle and Licensing Agency (DVLA). You should also inform your car insurance company. Please contact the DVLA if you have a HGV or PSV license.
- It is normally safe to fly one to two weeks after the procedure – you should check with your airline and insurance company.

Otherwise you can return to normal activities (including sex) as soon as you feel ready.

Cardiac rehabilitation

Cardiac rehabilitation programmes provide education, support, relaxation and exercise following your heart event, helping you to return to normal and adapt to living with heart disease. Following discharge, we will refer you to your local cardiac rehabilitation team.

Contact us

If you have any questions or concerns about your recovery when you are at home, please call the ward you stayed on:

- Becket Ward: **020 7188 0724**
- Stephen Ward: **020 7188 6463**

Alternatively, please call the cardiac rehabilitation advice line on **020 7188 0946** (Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm) or the cardiology nurse case managers on **020 7188 0978** (Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm)

Your comments and concerns

For advice, support or to raise a concern, contact our Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS). To make a complaint, contact the complaints department.

t: 020 7188 8801 (PALS) e: pals@gstt.nhs.uk
t: 020 7188 3514 (complaints) e: complaints2@gstt.nhs.uk

Useful sources of information

If you would like more information on any other issues relating to heart disease, please contact the **British Heart Foundation helpline** on **0300 330 3311** or visit **www.bhf.org.uk**

Driver Vehicle and Licensing Agency (DVLA)

Write to: Drivers' Medical Enquiries

DVLA

Swansea SA99 1TU

t: 0300 790 6806 w: www.gov.uk/contact-the-dvla

Leaflet number: 2689/VER4

Date published: January 2017

Review date: January 2020

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