Discharge Instructions for Mitral Valve Replacement

A mitral valve is placed in the heart when the existing mitral valve becomes tight or does not work well. It may take up to 12 weeks to recover. This may include a cardiac rehabilitation program.

Steps to Take

Home Care

To prevent infection at the incision site:

- Follow your doctor’s instructions on cleaning the incision site.
- Wash your hands before and after cleaning the incision site, or changing the dressing.
- Keep the area clean and dry.
- Ask your doctor when it is safe to shower, bathe, or soak in water.

Physical Activity

While you recover, you should avoid strenuous activities and heavy lifting. Ask your doctor when you will be able to return to work and drive.

Medications

If you had to stop medications before the procedure, ask your doctor when you can start again.

Your doctor may advise:

- Over-the-counter or prescription pain reliever
- Blood thinners to prevent blood clots
- Antibiotics before dental procedures or certain surgical procedures. Ask your doctor when this may be needed.

If you are taking medications, follow these general guidelines:

- Take your medication as directed. Do not change the amount or the schedule.
- Do not stop taking prescription medication without talking to your doctor.
- Do not share prescription medication.
- Ask what results and side effects to expect. Report them to your doctor.
Some medications can be dangerous when mixed. Talk to a doctor or pharmacist if you are taking more than one medication. This includes over-the-counter medication and herb or dietary supplements.

Plan ahead for refills so you don’t run out.

**Follow-up**

Your doctor will need to check on your progress. It is important to go to any recommended appointments.

**Call Your Doctor If Any of the Following Occur**

Contact your doctor if your recovery is not progressing as expected or you develop complications such as:

- Signs of infection, including fever and chills
- Redness, swelling, increasing pain, excessive bleeding, or any discharge from the incision site
- Constipation, diarrhea, bloody, or tarry-color bowel movements or stomach pain
- Weight gain—greater than 2 pounds in 2 days
- Worsening of ankle swelling
- Severe headache
- Nausea and/or vomiting
- Cough, shortness of breath, or chest pain
- Coughing up blood
- Skin rash, or unusual bruising or bleeding
- Confusion
- Lightheadedness when standing
- Tingling in hands and feet
- Irregular heartbeat, extremely slow pulse, or fast pulse
- Burning during urination

If you think you have an emergency, call for medical help right away.

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