

Maine Medical

PARTNERS

Congenital Heart

Discharge Instructions after Heart Surgery

Please call MMP – Congenital Heart at (207) 883-5532 if:

- Your child has a fever of 101 degrees (orally or rectally) or has chills
- The incision is:
 - Painful
 - Opens up
 - Has cloudy yellow or green drainage, or has a bad smell
 - Is red and the redness is spreading
- Your child has trouble breathing or has color changes (gray, pale or blue) of the skin, not lips or fingernails
- You have any questions about medications
- Your child has vomiting and/or diarrhea
- Your child has trouble eating, tires easily while eating, or is not interested in eating at all
- Your child has signs of dehydration such as dry mouth, no tears, or little or no urine output

Activity restrictions for infants

- No daycare until after the first follow-up visit
- Make sure all visitors and family members wash their hands prior to coming in contact with your child
- No contact with visitors or family members with flu-like or cold symptoms
- Do not lift your child from under the arms for 6-8 weeks. Rather, scoop from their bottom and back
- Young infants may do “tummy time” after four weeks

Activity restrictions for children

- No daycare or school until after the first follow-up visit
- Your child may swim in a private pools two weeks after surgery or a public pool, lake, or ocean four weeks after surgery
- No gym class, playground, skiing or bike riding for six weeks
- Do not allow your child to lift anything that weighs more than 10 pounds for 6 weeks
- Do not lift your child from under the arms for 6-8 weeks. Rather, scoop from their bottom and back

Activity restrictions for young adults

- No school or work until after the first follow-up visit
- No driving for six weeks
- No gym class or competitive sports for a minimum of six weeks
 - You will need permission from your cardiologist before returning to competitive sports
- No lifting of anything weighing more than 20 pounds, including backpacks, for six weeks

Wound care

- Gently clean the incision daily with soap and water
- Dry the incision well by patting with a clean soft towel
- Tub baths and showers may be taken five days after surgery. Submerging the wound in a bathtub or hot-tub should not be done until the scab is off of the wound and there are no open areas.
- No ointments or other home remedies should be applied to the incision until the scab is off of the wound.
- If your child goes home with stitches, they will be removed by the doctor at the first visit. Do not cut or trim stitches at home. A protruding or bulging stitch, especially at the top of the wound, is normal and should be left alone.
- **Please notify the office** if there is excessive redness, swelling, drainage or tenderness at the surgical site.

Immunizations

Please wait until after your first office visit after surgery before resuming your immunization schedule. Live vaccines (including MMR and Varicella) should be delayed for six weeks after surgery. Some patients will require a vaccine called Synagis to protect them from respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) during the winter months. Your cardiologist will discuss whether or not your child will need this vaccine.

Dental care and procedures

- No dental cleanings or scheduled surgeries for three months after heart surgery
- Between three and six months after surgery, antibiotics should be taken before dental procedures and before scheduled or emergency procedures
- Antibiotics are used to prevent an infection called bacterial endocarditis. This is referred to as SBE prophylaxis
- Please ask your cardiologist about The American Heart Association guidelines for SBE prophylaxis

Important phone numbers

- MMP - Congenital Heart: (207) 883-5532
- MMP - Cardiothoracic Surgery: (207) 773-8161