

# After Your Angioplasty: Femoral Artery Approach

## Discharge instructions for patients and families

Read this booklet to learn:

- what activities you can do at home
- how to care for your puncture site
- how to manage chest pain
- what problems to look out for
- when you will have a follow up visit



## **What activities can I do when I get home?**

You had a catheter (small tube) put into an artery in your groin during your angioplasty. When you return home don't do any tiring activities for 1 week. This will allow your groin puncture site to heal.

- Walk slowly. Slow walking is good for you. Your doctor will let you know if you should wait before you start walking.
- Climb stairs slowly for the first few days.
- Don't lift anything over 10 pounds (4.5 kilograms). For example, don't lift groceries, young children, or small pets.
- Don't do tiring exercise like aerobics or weight lifting until you see your cardiologist at your follow-up appointment.

You can take Tylenol (acetaminophen) for any groin pain you may feel.

## **When can I drive?**

You may drive a car 2 days after your procedure.

**If you had a heart attack before your angioplasty, you may have to wait up to 4 weeks. Your doctor will tell you when you can drive again.**

## **When can I go back to work?**

When you can go back to work will depend on:

- whether you had a heart attack recently
- what kind of work you do

Talk to your doctor about when you can go back to work.

## **What about sex?**

It is safe to have sex after you return home.

## **How do I care for the area on my groin where the catheter went in (puncture site)?**

1. Take the dressing (covering) off your groin the morning after you return home.
2. Put a Band-Aid over your puncture site and keep it on for 24 hours.
3. After 24 hours, take the Band-Aid off and leave the puncture site open to the air. This will help it to heal.

**Take showers not baths for 1 week after you return home.** Taking a hot bath can cause the puncture site at your groin to bleed.

You may have a small lump (the size of a large marble) at your puncture site. You may also have some bruising. This is normal. The lump will go away in about 4 to 8 weeks. The bruising will be gone in about 2 weeks.

Problems with the puncture site are rare. Call your doctor if you have any questions.



## **Go to the nearest emergency department right away if:**

- **You see the lump at your puncture site pulsating (beating).**  
Cover it loosely with a bandage. Don't press on the lump. The lump may be pulsating because there is a problem in the wall of your artery.
- **Your puncture site starts to bleed.**  
Lie down. Have a family member press firmly on your puncture site with 3 fingers for 15 minutes. If it doesn't stop bleeding, go to the nearest hospital emergency department.
- **You have pain in your lower abdomen (stomach area).**
- **Your leg or foot:**
  - feels very painful
  - gets cold or turns blue
  - becomes weak or numb

If you don't have someone to drive you to the hospital, **call 911 for an ambulance.**

Leave the front door open so the paramedics can enter your home.



## **Call your doctor and ask to have an appointment that day if:**

- your temperature rises above 38 °C or 101 °F and you feel chills
- your puncture site becomes red, swells or has pus (yellowish liquid) coming out of it

These may be signs of infection.

If you can't get an appointment with your doctor that day, go to the nearest emergency department.

## **How do I manage any chest pain?**

It is not unusual to have some angina (chest pain) in the first days or weeks after angioplasty. This pain is usually caused by spasms (sudden movements) of your artery. This will get better with time and rest.

Rest and your nitroglycerine (nitro) will improve your chest pain.



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