

Care after a cardiac (heart) catheterization (cath)



Returning to your child's daily routine

Your child's doctor will talk with you about specific care for your child. Some guidelines include:

- Your child may return to most normal activities after going home from the hospital. However, they should not run, bike, skate, jump, swim or play contact sports (such as football, basketball or soccer) for 3 days after the heart cath (or longer if advised in your child's care instructions).
- Most children do not need any pain medicine by the time they go home. If needed, you may give your child acetaminophen (Tylenol or less costly store brand) or ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin or less costly store brand) unless a doctor has told you not to.
- Your child may go back to school the next day but should not take part in gym class or physical education (PE) for 3 days (or longer if advised in your child's care instructions).

Care of the heart cath site

Your child's heart cath site may be tender or bruised.

- The bruising should go away after about 1 to 2 weeks.
- Keep the area dry and clean.
- Your child should not take a bath for 3 days after the heart cath. They can take a shower or sponge bath but should try to keep the cath site dry.
- Your child should not get in a pool, lake or ocean for 3 days after the heart cath.
- Put an adhesive bandage, such as a Band-Aid, over the heart cath site for the next few days. The bandage should be changed at least 1 time each day but can be changed more often if it gets wet or dirty.

When to call your child's cardiologist (heart doctor)

Call your child's cardiologist (heart doctor) if your child has:

- Excessive bleeding (extreme amount of bleeding).
 - A small amount of blood on the bandage is normal. If bleeding at the site soaks through your child's adhesive bandage:
 - Have them lie down.
 - Put pressure on the site until the bleeding stops.
 - Call the doctor.
 - If the bleeding does not stop after several minutes of putting pressure on the site, call your child's doctor or go to the emergency department (ED) **right away** for more instructions.
- Fever higher than 101°F during the week after the heart cath.
- Redness, swelling, heat or liquid oozing from your child's heart cath site.
- Complaints of major (very bad) pain at the cath site that is getting worse.
- Trouble walking.
- A difference in temperature or color of your child's legs or neck.
- Complaints of tightness or pain in their chest

The Cardiac Call Center is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. You may call 404-256-2593 or 1-800-542-2233 with questions or concerns.

This teaching sheet contains general information only. Talk with your child's doctor or a member of your child's healthcare team about specific care of your child.

In case of an urgent concern or emergency, call 911 or go to the nearest emergency department right away.