

Angioplasty: Femoral Artery Approach



UHN

Discharge Instructions for Patients and Families

Department: Cardiac Interventional Program

1. Activity

When you return home after your angioplasty, do not do any strenuous activities for 1 week to allow the groin puncture site to heal.

- **Pain:** Use Tylenol[®] or acetaminophen for pain.
- **Lifting:** Do not lift heavy items such as groceries, children, full laundry baskets, small pets. Weight should not be more than 10 lbs.
- **Climbing stairs:** Climb stairs slowly for the first few days.
- **Walking:** Slow walking is good for you, unless your doctor has told you not to walk.
- **Exercise:** Do not do strenuous exercise such as aerobics, weight lifting until you see your cardiologist.
- **Driving:** You may drive a car 2 days after your procedure. However, if you had a heart attack before your angioplasty, wait until your doctor tells you when you can drive again (usually 4 weeks after the heart attack).
- **Returning to work:** Ask your doctor when you may return to work. This will depend on whether you have had a heart attack recently, and whether your work is physically demanding.
- **Sexual intimacy:** It is safe to have sex after you return home.

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Created: 07/2004

Form: D-5239



2. Care of insertion site

- Take the dressing off your groin the morning after you return home. Put a bandage on at the puncture site on your groin. Keep the bandage on for 1 day, then take the bandage off and leave it open to the air.
- Take showers not baths for 1 week to help the puncture site heal. Do not sit in a hot bath for the first 7 days after your procedure because this can cause the puncture site at your groin to bleed.
- You may have a small lump (the size of a large marble) or you may just have bruising at the puncture site. This is normal. The lump will disappear in 4 to 8 weeks.
- As you become more active, you may see bruising on the inside of your leg. This is normal. It is just old blood under the skin moving down your leg. The bruising will be gone in about 2 weeks.

Problems with the catheter insertion site are rare but can happen. If you have any of the following symptoms, call your family doctor immediately, or go to the nearest hospital emergency department:

- If you see the lump pulsate (move) under your skin, loosely cover it with a band-aid and go to the nearest hospital emergency department. Do not apply pressure. If the lump is pulsating (moving), it might be because something has gone wrong in the wall of the artery. If you do not have someone to drive you to the hospital, call 911 for an ambulance. Leave your front door open so that the paramedics can enter your home.
- If the puncture site in your groin starts to bleed, lie down and have a family member apply firm pressure with 3 fingers for 15 minutes. If bleeding does not stop go to the nearest hospital emergency department.
- If you have pain in the lower abdomen (stomach area) above the puncture site, go to the nearest hospital emergency department.
- If you have a fever, or the puncture site becomes red, swells up, or has pus draining from it, contact your doctor.
- If you get a bad pain in the leg where the puncture site is, or in your foot, or the leg or foot gets cold and turns blue, go to the nearest hospital emergency department.
- If the puncture site becomes painful, or the affected leg becomes weak or numb, contact your doctor.

3. Chest pain

It is not unusual to have some angina in the first days or weeks after angioplasty. This is usually due to spasm of the artery.

You can relieve the angina with rest and your nitroglycerine. If you have chest pain (angina), take your nitro and wait 5 minutes. If you still have chest pain, take a second nitro and wait 5 minutes. If you still have chest pain, take a third nitro and wait 5 minutes. If your angina does not go away in 15 minutes after 3 sprays of nitroglycerine, go to nearest hospital emergency department or call 911. **Do not drive yourself to the hospital.** Contact your cardiologist if angina happens more often.

4. Medical follow-up

- Book an appointment with your cardiologist for one month after your angioplasty.
- Expect to have an exercise stress test* within 6 to 8 weeks, and a nuclear perfusion scan* (to show the pattern of blood flow to the heart) about 6 months after your angioplasty.

*Ask your cardiologist about these tests.