

# Angioplasty: Radial Artery Approach



UHN

## Discharge Instructions for Patients and Families

Department: Cardiac Interventional Program

### 1. Activity

When you return home, be careful not to strain the wrist where you had the catheter (tube) inserted for your angioplasty.

- Rest with your forearm and hand supported on a pillow.
- Do not bend your wrist for 8 hours after your procedure.
- Do not work on a computer, knit or wring clothes for 1 day.
- Do not lift anything heavy for 2 days (examples include children, grocery bags, full laundry baskets, small pets).
- Use Tylenol or acetaminophen for any discomfort.
- You may drive an **automatic car** 1 day after you return home. (If you had a heart attack before your angioplasty, your doctor will tell you when you can drive again – usually 3 to 4 weeks after the heart attack).
- You may drive a **standard shift car** after 2 days.

### 2. Care of the catheter insertion site

- Remove the dressing from your wrist the morning after you return home. Put a bandage on your wrist for 24 hours.
- You may have a small lump (size of a pimple) and/or bruising at the insertion site on your wrist. This is normal. The lump will go away in about 2 to 4 weeks. The bruising will disappear over 1 week.

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

- If you see the lump on your wrist pulsating, loosely cover it with a bandage and go to the nearest hospital emergency department. Do not apply pressure to the lump. If the lump is pulsating, 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 the front door open so that the paramedics can enter your home.
- If the puncture site starts to bleed, apply firm pressure and 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 severe pain in your arm or hand, or your arm or hand gets cold, turns blue or goes numb, go to the nearest hospital emergency department.

### 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 nitro, go to the 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 1 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.