



Cardiac Surgery: What to Expect

- **Home Team** (patients need help the first week they are home)
 - A spouse, significant other, family member or friend:
 - Provides support and encouragement
 - Learns medications and incision care
 - Assists with transportation, shopping, meals and follow-up appointments
- **Hospital Team** (color-coded scrubs by function)
 - Physician assistants/nurse practitioners – support surgeons, provide patient care (**maroon scrubs**)
 - Nurses – provide patient care (navy blue scrubs)
 - Clinical technicians – work with nurses, handle IVs, labs and bathing (**green scrubs**)
 - Case managers – plan for discharge
 - Home health liaisons – set up home health nurse
 - Patient care navigators – provide pre- and post-op education
 - Physical therapists/occupational therapists – evaluate patient mobility, support daily living activities, (**dark green scrubs**)
 - Specialists – provide respiratory, endocrinology and nutrition support

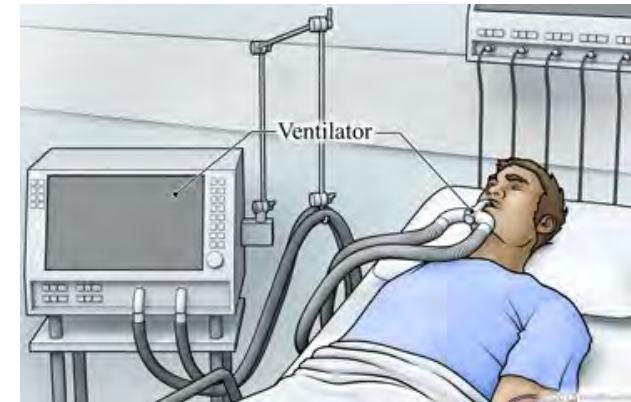
- Pre-op testing and appointments
- Medications
 - Learn which medications to stop before surgery
 - Learn about new pre-op medications
- Work arrangements
 - Return to work is based on the individual
- Home arrangements
 - Tell care team about stairs, pets, and small children
 - Arrange for transportation – no driving for approximately six weeks
 - Patient should sit in the back seat to avoid air bags
 - Enlist help

- No food or drink after 11:00 PM the day before surgery, or as instructed by cardiac surgery Nurse Practitioner.
- What to bring, what to leave at home:
 - Bring: eyeglasses, toiletries, cell phones, dentures or retainers, laptop, e-readers, CPAP, bathrobe
 - Don't bring: jewelry, at-home medications, contact lenses, valuables
- On the day of surgery:
 - Park in the Gray garage, IHVI building
 - [Campus Map](#)
 - Check in at Cardiac Surgery desk on the ground floor, to the left of elevators
 - Move to Pre-Op on the second floor
 - Fill out consent forms, meet surgeon and operating room (OR) staff

- Family and friends can wait in waiting area during surgery:
 - Has status board, TV, vending machine, WiFi
 - Food available at Inova Fairfax Hospital
 - Contact with surgeon after surgery and transfer
- Please adhere to all visitation policies during your time at our facility
 - These are in place for everyone's safety



- Transfer from OR to Cardiovascular ICU (CVICU)
- Attachments to expect:
 - IVs and oxygen
 - Chest tubes
 - Telemetry box and wires
 - Pacer box and wires
 - Ventilator
 - Urinary catheter
 - Insulin drip
 - PREVENA™ wound system (not everyone)
- While in CVICU:
 - Close monitoring of vital signs
 - One to two visitors allowed
 - No flowers allowed



Transferring to CVSD = one step closer to home

- Vital signs every four hours
- Sequential compression devices (SCDs)
- Advancing diet
- Bandages, chest tubes, pacer wires, oxygen removal
- Walking...walking...walking
- Incentive spirometer, Acapella®
- Diuresis (getting rid of fluid)
- Labs – often drawn at 4 a.m.
- Work with physical therapy and occupational therapy (PT/OT)
- Informational videos available in room



- Incisional pain, chest tubes, sore throat from ventilator, general soreness and bruising
- Weight gain
- Interruptions, lack of sleep
- Poor appetite, nausea, change in taste
- Various alarms, unit noise
- Constipation

- Patients will experience some pain after surgery.
- We try to manage patients' pain without the use of narcotics.
- Patients should ask for pain medication when they need it.
- Medications can be adjusted if pain is not well managed.
- An appropriate pain goal for most patients is a 3 out of 10. Pain is different for each person.

Mild 1 – 3



Treatments:

Tylenol
Repositioning/walking
Deep breathing
Icepack/heating pad

Moderate 4 – 6



Treatments:

Tramadol
Gabapentin
Lidoderm patch

Severe 7 – 10



Treatments:

Percocet
Oxycodone
Dilaudid

*** Ibuprofen/Motrin/Advil/NSAIDs are not used for cardiovascular surgery patients.**

- Vital Signs
 - Heart rate and rhythm
 - Blood pressure
 - Temperature
 - Breathing
- Signs of infection
- Electrolyte imbalance
- Intake/output – fluid retention and weight
- Mobility – walking with little to no assistance
 - If you have stairs at home, you will practice stairs with PT/OT team
- Manageable pain
- Bowel movement



- **Anticoagulants** (e.g., Heparin)
 - Helps prevent blood clots. Can help lower the chance of heart attack and stroke. Also used to protect bypass grafts and stents in the heart.
- **Beta Blockers** (e.g., Metoprolol)
 - Lowers blood pressure and slows heart rate. Works by altering hormones (body chemicals) that are damaging to the heart. May strengthen the heart's pumping action over time.
- **ACE Inhibitors** (e.g., Lisinopril)
 - Lowers blood pressure and decreases strain on the heart. Makes it easier for the heart to pump and improves blood flow.
- **Antiarrhythmics** (e.g., Amiodarone)
 - Prevents or treats irregular heart rhythm.
- **Diuretics (“fluid pills”)** (e.g., Lasix)
 - Helps prevent or treat excess fluid buildup in the body.
- **Pain medications** (e.g., Tramadol, Tylenol)
 - Decreases and helps to manage postoperative pain.
- **Stool softeners/laxatives** (e.g., Miralax, Peri-Colace)
 - Prevents or treats constipation.

- Review discharge packet/after visit summary
- Get prescriptions – new and continuing
 - IHVI Pharmacy is available for prescriptions
- Schedule follow-up appointments
- Be ready to be discharged early
 - Have your ride set up and ready
- Wear loose-fitting clothes for the ride home
- Choose post-discharge care option:
 - Visit from home health liaison
 - Acute rehabilitation (short-term stay), skilled nursing*
 - Cardiac rehabilitation – near your home, on your schedule



* In rare cases, your care team may feel that you would benefit from additional rehabilitation and might refer you to an acute rehabilitation center or skilled nursing facility before going home. **This will be determined during your stay.**

Necessities:

- Blood pressure cuff
- Scale
- Thermometer
- Gentle body wash (no bar soap, not scented, not antibacterial)

Optional Items:

- Washcloths
- Shower chair
- Wedge pillow or recliner



Inova has post-discharge resources that can help.

- Mended Hearts – support group for patients
- Healing after surgery
- Smoking cessation
- Heart-healthy diet
- Pastoral care (emotional and spiritual support)
- Physical activity
- Sexual activity
- Diabetes management
- Combating depression

- We look forward to seeing you soon.
- If you have questions or concerns, please feel free to reach out to one of us or your surgeon's office.

Resources and Information:

www.inovaheart.org

www.inovaheart.org/mysurgery

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