

Open Heart Discharge Instructions For Dr. Esper's Patients

1. You will be told to call for or be given an appointment time with your cardiac surgeon approximately 4 weeks after discharge. If an appointment is not given, you please call upon arriving home from the hospital and do not wait until the end of the 4 weeks. Dr. Esper's office and telephone number is:

3903 South 7th Street Suite 2B
Professional Office Building
Terre Haute, In 47802
812-232-2708

2. A Chest X-ray needs to be taken prior to your first office visit. You will have to obtain this from the hospital you had your surgery or from the hospital nearest to you. Bring a copy of the X-ray to your appointment. You will be given an order for one on discharge and please take it with you to the hospital when you go for your X-ray. If you do not have an order, please call Dr. Esper's office to fax one.

3. **YOU MAY SHOWER.** Allow the water to touch the incision and cleanse with soap. Pat dry after the shower. Avoid taking baths, so the incision is not under water for too long to avoid infection. Dermabond (skin glue) may look like a scar. You may peel off with Vaseline within 1-2 weeks after discharge.

4. Wear your TED hose (white support hose). You may take them off for bathing in the shower and at bedtime. It is not necessary to wear them to your first post-op appointment. Also, elevate your legs whenever possible to a level higher than your chest to prevent swelling.

5. Avoid being outside when the temperature is extreme (very hot or cold). No lifting anything over 15 pounds; no heavy housework or heavy pushing activity (vacuuming, mowing grass, moving furniture, shoveling snow) for 6 weeks. You may go up and down stairs, but go slowly at first. Please walk for at least 1 hour per day.

6. **DO NOT DRIVE** for 6 weeks from the date of your surgery. This is to avoid injury to your breastbone. Complete healing may take up to 3 months.

7. If you were on a controlled or diabetic diet before the surgery you should resume that diet. A dietician may see you before discharge to instruct you about low salt and low cholesterol dietary guidelines. A poor appetite is common after surgery, it is important to aid healing with nutritious diet.

8. You may resume sexual activity when you feel you are ready.

9. After your first post-op visit, continued exercise is important to return to normal activities and to prevent complications. Walking is a good beginning. A cardiac rehab program can begin after you see your cardiologist.

10. Your cardiologist or Dr. Esper will leave your discharge prescriptions. Make an appointment to see your cardiologist whenever they advise you to do so. If an appointment is not made prior to discharge, please call their office to make the arrangements.

11. You may be tired and have discomforts for up to 3 months after surgery. These discomforts are normal. While it is good to be active, start slowly and use your pain pills only as necessary. Lack of sleep is common. Avoid sleeping during the day to maximize night sleep.

12. Please call if you have any questions, concerns or any complaints.

13. CALL YOUR SURGEON FOR:

Increased incisional redness or swelling

Tan or yellow incisional drainage with or without foul odor. Some serous or “old” bloody drainage is normal

Elevated temperature greater than 101 F

Any gaps or openings appearing in the incision

Chest tube site may appear open. Keep clean with Bacitracin-Z ointment

14. CALL YOU CARDIOLOGIST FOR:

Excessive shortness of breath

Angina or chest pain

Irregular heart beats

Questions or problems with your medications such as nausea, constipation, fluid retention, inability to sleep

THE FOLLOWING INSTRUCTIONS ARE FOR THOSE PATIENTS HAVING A PROSTHETIC VALVE INSERTED

There are two types of prosthetic valves:

Mechanical: made from metal and plastic

Tissue: made from specially treated animal tissue

Coumadin may be prescribed temporarily for a tissue or permanently for a mechanical valve.

Coumadin lengthens the time it takes your blood to clot and prevents clots from forming on your new prosthetic valve. You must be careful to prevent bruises, cuts and accidents.

In order to prevent infection and excessive bleeding, it may be necessary to administer antibiotics and interrupt Coumadin therapy to have dental work or further surgery. Please inform your dentist/physician.

Your cardiologist or family physician will regulate your Coumadin.

You may or may not hear the “clicking” action of your valve. This is normal.