

Pediatric and Congenital Heart Center of Alabama Cardiovascular Surgery

Going Home After Cardiac Surgery



Children's
of Alabama®

PEDIATRIC & CONGENITAL
HEART
Center
of Alabama

1600 7th Ave S • Birmingham, AL 35233 • www.childrensal.org

Call your Pediatric Cardiologist if any of the following occur:

- Your child has a temperature greater than 101° orally (100.5° for infants).
- The incision is painful, red, opens up, or has drainage.
- Your child has trouble breathing or skin color changes.
- Increased swelling around the eyes or feet.
- Less wet diapers or decreased urine output.
- Nausea or vomiting.
- If your child is not eating as well or feeling as well as they did the day before.



Activity at Home After Surgery

Infants

- Avoid lifting your child under the arms for 6 weeks. Use one hand under their bottom and one on their back to scoop them up.
- No contact with family members who have been sick.
- Avoid crowds until first follow up visit.
- Anyone touching your child should wash their hands often.
- No daycare until approved by cardiologist.

Children

- No school until approved by your cardiologist.
- Encourage your child to participate in normal activities such as feeding self, getting dressed and quiet play.
- An increase in activity level is normal. Your child may have more energy now.
- Encourage rest periods. Your child will often stop if tired.
- No gym class, playground, sports or activities that could result in injury to the chest bone for 6 to 8 weeks.
- Do not lift, pull or push more than a few pounds for the first 2 weeks. After 2 weeks, your child may lift up to 10 pounds.
- Do not pick your child up from under the arms. Scoop them up with one hand under the bottom and one on their back.
- Continue good oral care brushing teeth daily.

Young Adults

- Encourage participation in normal daily activities such as getting dressed, eating, and play.
- Your child may be moody or unhappy after surgery. Be patient and support them during this time.
- No school or work until approved by cardiologists.
- Avoid excessive sleeping or sitting.
- Avoid activities that could result in injury to the chest bone until approved by cardiologist. Examples are contact sports, gym, trampoline, bike riding.
- For 2 weeks after going home, do not lift pull or push more than a few pounds. After 2 weeks, your child may lift up to 10 pounds. After 6 weeks he/she may lift up to 20 pounds.
- Continue good mouth care and brush teeth daily.
- No driving a car until approved by cardiologist.

Incision Care

- It is okay to shower and wash the incision with gentle soap and water. Pat incision dry immediately after shower or bath. Babies and small children can have a bath, but do not put incisions underwater.
- Dermabond (incision glue) or steri-strips (pieces of tape) will come off on its own with gentle washing. Please do not pick it off!
- No lotions, ointments, powder or oil on or around incision until completely healed (at least 6 weeks).
- Avoid lifting your child under the arms for 6 weeks. Use your hand to scoop or lift your child under his/her bottom and the other hand on their back.
- Older female children and adolescents should wear a bra to support the breast until the incision is healed.
- Protect the incision from the sun for 1 year.

Immunizations

- Immunizations can be given after 6 weeks. If your child is on Synagis, keep getting this every month.

Dental Care and Procedures

- Avoid any routine dental work or invasive medical procedures for 6 months.

Discharge Medications

- Do NOT give any old medications you have at home unless instructed.
- Please give medications to your child exactly as ordered.
- Tylenol can be given for discomfort.
- Instructions will be given to you if your child is on Coumadin or Lovenox (a blood thinner).



Follow-up Instructions

Continue routine follow-up appointments with your doctor. Let any other doctor your child may have know about the heart surgery.