



THE OHIO STATE
UNIVERSITY

WEXNER MEDICAL CENTER

Cardiac Surgery Recovery

ANSWERS TO THE MOST COMMON QUESTIONS

EVERYDAY RECOVERY

How often should I shower?

Shower daily once you leave the hospital

What kind of soap should I use?

Use a CHG cleanser or any antibacterial soap. Avoid body washes that contain heavy fragrance, as these can irritate the skin during the healing process

How do I get the sticky glue off my skin?

For any adhesive left on your skin from monitoring patches or bandages, use a small amount of baby oil on a soft rag or cotton ball to help remove.

How long should I use my incentive spirometer?

Use for 6 weeks following surgery to help the small air sacs in the lungs to reopen and avoid pneumonia and shortness of breath

FOLLOW-UP CARE

How long should I use pain medications?

As you increase your activity, minimal soreness is to be expected. Tylenol is recommended to help ease pain. Resting, ice or heat will also help reduce the amount of pain.

When should I see the surgeon?

4-6 weeks from your surgery. If you did not receive an appointment at the time of discharge, please contact our office to schedule.

When should I see my cardiologist?

Within 6 weeks of your surgery

When should I see my primary care doctor?

Within 2 weeks of discharge from the hospital

When can I start cardiac rehabilitation?

As early as 4 weeks following surgery or after completion of home physical therapy

HOBBIES

When can I return to working out?

You must first complete your sternal precautions and cardiac rehabilitation, if applicable. Your cardiologist will evaluate your recovery and recommend a time frame.

When can I go hunting or shoot guns?

You will need to double your sternal precautions before returning to shooting a firearm due to the kick. Bow hunting is similar due to the pressure applied on the bow.

When can I go fishing?

Once your sternal precautions are complete, you may slowly return to fishing. Limit overhand casting and fishing for large fish.

When can I play sports?

Double your sternal precautions before returning to contact and non-contact (golf, tennis, etc.) sports, and consult with your cardiologist before returning to these activities.

When can I do water aerobics or swimming?

Once you have completed your sternal precautions, as long as you have no complications of wounds or open wounds still present. Always shower with antibacterial soap following swimming in a pool, lake or the ocean in order to prevent wound infection.

