

After ICD Surgery

A guide to leaving the hospital and going home



VANDERBILT HEART

Before you go home

Choose a caregiver.

- Have someone who can help you pack up and go home.
- Have your caregiver bring your house key to the hospital if you don't have it with you.

Understand how to take your medicines.

Medicine errors are a common reason patients do not get better and have to return to the hospital.

- Take your medicines every day.
- Know what your medicines are for. Before you leave, ask your doctor or nurse if you have any questions.
- Know when to take your medicines.
 - You or your caregiver may want to take notes to remind you what your medicines are for and how to take them.
 - You may want to get a pill organizer to help you keep track of your medicines.
- Do not skip, stop, or take extra doses of your medicines without talking to your doctor.
- Do not take medicines you can buy at the store unless your doctor says it is OK.
- Keep a list of all the medicines you take. This includes non-prescription medicines and herbals.



Don't leave anything behind.

Along with your personal items, make sure you have:

- the temporary ID card for your ICD (The manufacturer will send your permanent card to your home address in 4 to 6 weeks.)
- follow-up instructions from your doctor
- the date of your follow-up appointment
- the list of medicines you need to take.

Arrange for a ride home.

You must have a ride home from the hospital. You will not be allowed to drive yourself home.

You cannot drive for 7 days after your surgery unless your doctor tells you it is OK.

Now that you are home

Take care of your incision.

- Do not get your incision wet for 1 week after your surgery.
- If you want to shower, tape some plastic wrap over your incision to protect it from getting wet.
- Eight days after surgery, starting on this day: _____, you may begin to clean your incision. Wash with soap and water ONLY.
- Your steri-strips will begin to peel off by themselves after a week. This is normal. You do not need to remove all your steri-strips at any time. But once they begin to peel off, it is OK if you remove them.
- Do not put any lotions, creams, peroxide, alcohol, or ointments on your incision.

You might have incision pain as you heal. Take acetaminophen (Tylenol) as needed. Follow the directions on the bottle.

Follow your doctor's instructions about what you can and can't do.



When you get home from surgery, you will need to carefully and gradually increase your activity level.

For 6 weeks after your surgery do not:

- lift anything heavier than 10 pounds
- golf or swim
- use a lawn mower or weed trimmer
- stretch the arm on the ICD side up over your head.

As soon as you get home, you may:

- use the arm on the ICD side, as long as you don't raise it higher than your shoulder
- do the range-of-motion exercises that you were taught in the hospital.
 - Walk your arm gently up a wall.
 - Do arm circles.

Keep your appointments.

Your doctor will help you take care of your heart so you can feel better and live longer.

You are invited to join the Vanderbilt ICD Support Group.

The support group meets 2 times a year and is supported by Vanderbilt Heart doctors and staff. Guest speakers share information with patients that affects their daily lives.

For more information, call (615) 322-2318.

Remember!

Call us at (615) 322-2318 if you:

- have any concern that your incision is not healing right
- notice any changes to your incision like:
 - redness, drainage, discharge, warmth, or swelling
 - separation of the wound edges.
- have a fever of 100°F (37.8°C) or more
- feel increased shortness of breath during normal activities
- feel increased shortness of breath during sleep or while resting
- get 1 shock from your ICD without any symptoms
- have sudden weight gain (3 or more pounds in 1 day or 5 pounds in 2 days).

Go to the emergency room or call 911 if you:

- have chest pain that lasts more than 10 minutes or is really bad
- feel dizzy or like you are going to pass out for more than 15 minutes
- pass out
- have a heart rate that is more than 120 beats a minute
- get 1 shock from your ICD with symptoms
- get 2 or more shocks in a row, with or without symptoms
- get 2 or more shocks in 24 hours, with or without symptoms.

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