Activity limits
To protect your heart and incision:
• Light activity for the next 6 to 8 weeks.
• No lifting, pulling or pushing over 10 pounds. A gallon of milk weighs 8 pounds.
• Do not put both hands behind your back at the same time.
• No driving until your doctor gives you the okay to drive. Ride in the back seat and use the heart pillow between your chest and the seat belt.

Walk and move for healing
• Walk and move to reduce chances of blood clots and pneumonia.
• Wear shoes that support your feet.
• For safety, have help walking at first. Start with 5 to 10 minute walks, 3 to 5 times each day.
• Start slow and increase your speed and distance slowly.
• Avoid hills and walking outside in bad weather.
• If you do not feel good, stop and rest.
• Do not use treadmills or stationary bikes for 4 weeks.
• After 4 to 6 weeks, start a cardiac rehab program in your area. A referral will be faxed, but if you have questions, call 614-293-6937.

Rest as needed
• Do the most important chores first.
• Rest and take naps as needed.
• Limit going up and down stairs.
• Limit visitors and outings.

Cough and deep breathe
• Use your incentive spirometer every hour you are awake for 2 to 3 weeks or until your cough is very dry.

After surgery blues
• It is common feel sad or frustrated. Get plenty of rest and plan for fun and easy activities.

Eating and drinking
• Limit fluids to 2 liters each day.
• Weigh yourself each morning. If you gain 2 pounds or more in 1 day or 5 pounds in a week, call your nurse or doctor.
• It is normal to have little appetite, so eat appealing foods until your appetite returns. Your body needs the calories and proteins for healing.
• After 4 to 6 weeks or when appetite returns, focus on heart healthy foods and drinks. Limit sodium or salt, fat, caffeine and cholesterol foods and drinks as directed.
Medicines

- Only take medicines listed on your discharge instructions. These may be different than your medicines before surgery.
- You will have a prescription for pain medicine.
- If you need to take insulin injections, ask for information before you leave the hospital.
- **Only take over the counter medicines or supplements if approved by your doctor.**

Incision care

- Take showers only, no tub baths. Do not let the shower spray directly hit your incision.
- Clean your incision with soap and water 2 times each day. Rinse the incision and pat dry. Leave uncovered and allow scab to form.
- Avoid lotions, oils and powders on incision.
- Check for redness, streaking, swelling or fever and report any of these signs of infection.

Avoid tobacco and smoke

Using tobacco or being around others who smoke can increase your blood pressure and slow healing. Tobacco use increases risk of lung cancer and coronary artery disease. It can limit the life of coronary artery grafts. Ask for tobacco cessation information if needed.

Talk to your doctor or health care team if you have any questions about your care.

For more health information, contact the Library for Health Information at 614-293-3707 or e-mail health-info@osu.edu.

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