

<i>Client:</i>	<i>Date:</i>
<i>Clinician:</i>	

Your doctor performed coronary artery bypass graft surgery (also called CABG, pronounced “cabbage”). This surgery created a new pathway around blocked parts of your heart’s blood vessels, allowing blood to reach your heart muscle. Your doctor used a healthy blood vessel from another part of your body (a graft) to restore blood flow.

### **Activity:**

- Discuss with your doctor what you can and can’t do as you recover. You will have good and bad days. This is normal. But tell your doctor if you feel depressed, have trouble sleeping, or have a persistent decrease in appetite. Although these problems are common after surgery, they can slow your recovery. It’s important to seek help.
- Let others drive you to appointments for the first 3-6 weeks after your surgery.
- Ask someone to stand nearby while you shower or do other activities, just in case you need help.
- Weigh yourself every day, at the same time of day. Quick weight gain can be a sign of a problem that needs your doctor’s attention.
- Start doing light work around the house and yard after 2-3 weeks at home. Don’t lift anything heavier than 5 pounds. Until approved by your doctor, avoid mowing the lawn, vacuuming, and doing other activities that could strain your breastbone.

### **Incision Care**

Healing takes several weeks. The bandage or dressing on your chest will likely be removed before you go home. If it is still in place, ask your nurse how you should care for it after you return home. Do the following to care for your incision:

- Clean your incision every day with soap and water.
- Gently pat the area of the incision to dry it.
- Don’t use any powders, lotions, or oils on your incision until it is well healed.

### **Lifestyle Changes**

- Ask your doctor when you can start a walking program.
  - If you haven’t already started a walking program in the hospital, begin with short walks (about 5 minutes) at home. Go a little longer each day.
  - Choose a safe place with a level surface, such as a local park or mall.
  - Wear supportive shoes to prevent injury to your knees and ankles.
  - Walk with someone. It’s more fun and helps you stay with it.

### **IMPORTANT NOTICE**

Contact the on-call nurse if you are experiencing any change in your current health condition.  
For ALL emergencies requiring IMMEDIATE medical attention, call 911.

- Take your medications exactly as directed. Don't skip doses.
- Maintain a healthy weight. Get help to lose any extra pounds.
- Cut back on salt.
  - Limit canned, dried, packaged, and fast foods.
  - Don't add salt to your food at the table
  - Season foods with herbs instead of salt when you cook.
- Break the smoking habit. Enroll in a stop-smoking program to improve your chances of success

### **When to Call Your Doctor or Nurse**

Call immediately if you have any of the following:

- Chest pain or a return of the heart symptoms you had before your surgery
- Fever above 100.0°F
- Signs of infection (redness, swelling, drainage, or warmth) at the incision site
- Shortness of breath
- Fainting
- Weight gain of more than 3 pounds in 24 hours or more than 5 pounds in 1 week(s)
- New or increased swelling in your hands, feet, or ankles
- Unrelieved pain at the incision site(s)
- Changes in the location, type, or severity of pain
- Fast or irregular pulse
- Any unusual bleeding

Adapted from *Clinical Pathways for the Multidisciplinary Home Care Team Volume 2 and Krames On-Line*

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