

INTRODUCTION

Welcome home! Having a heart attack can be a very stressful time in your life and impacts your family and friends. We want to help you recover as smoothly as possible. Our teaching program starts today and is a review of the basic information you need to know once you get home. Over the next several days, you can access a series of teaching modules to help you on your journey to recovery.

If you are being followed by the rapid response nurses, they will help you access the teaching modules. These are online on our website (www.mbacsnetwork.ca/education or use QR code on the last page). We recommend you go through one module a day.

If you are being followed by remote home monitoring, you will be prompted every day to access a new module.

Anyone can access the teaching at the Acute Coronary Syndrome Network www.mbacsnetwork.ca/education or use the QR code below.

Let's get started! The first module will focus on what you need to know on your first day at home.

HEART WARNINGS

Do not ignore what your heart is telling you, listen to your body. The warning signs that might indicate a heart problem are:

- Chest discomfort (pressure, squeezing, fullness or pain, burning, or heaviness). You may feel this in your neck, jaw, shoulders, or back.
- Sweating
- Nausea (feeling like you need to vomit)
- Feeling faint or passing out
- Shortness of breath
- Palpitations (racing heart rate)
- Unusual fatigue
- Indigestion

This is a long list, but remember, most of the time you will feel the same things as you did when you had your heart attack.

What should you do if you have chest pain or discomfort?

- STOP what you are doing and sit or lie down.
- If someone is with you, tell them how you are feeling.

- You should make sure you have a phone nearby.
- If you are having chest pain or discomfort, take a dose of nitroglycerin to see if it helps:
 - Get the bottle ready by spraying into the air a few times.
 - Take 1 spray UNDER the tongue and leave it there.
 - DO NOT inhale or swallow the spray, or it will not work.
 - If the chest pain or discomfort is not relieved after 5 minutes, repeat the dose.
 - If the chest pain or discomfort continues 5 minutes after the 2nd dose, call 911 (or your local emergency number) for help, do not drive yourself.
 - If alone, you may consider calling a family member or friend to let them know what is happening.

What should you do if you feel something else on the above list?

- STOP whatever you are doing and sit or lie down.
- If someone is with you, tell them how you are feeling.
- You should make sure you have a phone nearby.
- Try to relax and rest for 10 minutes, if you still feel badly, call 911 (or your local emergency number) for help, do not drive yourself. If you are feeling better after resting, make sure you tell the nurse or doctor the next time they contact you.

BLEEDING PROBLEMS

You may have a bruise where the catheter (tube) was put in your wrist or groin area during your angiogram. This is not uncommon and will go away on its own after a few weeks. It may feel sore at that spot for a few days. You can take the bandage off after 24 hours.

If you see blood or have a growing lump at your groin, this means you are bleeding:

- Lie down and have someone place firm pressure with their hand on the groin over the bleeding spot or lump for 5-10 minutes or until the bleeding stops. Use a clean cloth if possible.
- If you are alone, lie down and apply firm pressure with your hand on the
- Groin over the bleeding spot or lump.
- If the bleeding stops, remain lying down for 1 hour and then replace the bandage with a clean one.

Even if the bleeding or growing lump stops you need to be checked TODAY at nearest Emergency Department or Urgent Care Centre.

- If the bleeding or growing lump does not stop, call 911 (or your local emergency number).

If you see blood or have a growing lump from your wrist, this means you are bleeding:

- Sit down and press where it is bleeding with the tips of 2 to 3 fingers for 5-10 minutes.
- If the bleeding stops, do not use your wrist for the next hour and use your hand as little as possible for the next 48 hours so the wrist has a chance to heal. Replace the bandage with a clean one once the bleeding has stopped.

Even if the bleeding or growing lump stops you need to be checked TODAY at nearest Emergency Department or Urgent Care Centre.

- If the bleeding or growing lump does not stop, call 911 (or your local emergency number).

OTHER PROBLEMS TO LOOK FOR:

- Signs of an allergic reaction such as an itchy rash (hives on your skin), swelling of the throat or tongue, or difficulty breathing (this is rare).
- New belly or back pain (if the catheter was placed in your groin).
- Severe pain, cold, numb, or blue foot or hand on the same side as the catheter was placed.

If any of these things happen, call 911 (or your local emergency number). DO NOT drive yourself and DO NOT delay seeking medical help.

MEDICATIONS

It is important to go to your pharmacy and fill your prescription. Medications are an important part of your recovery and will reduce the risk of you having another heart attack and improve symptoms such as angina (chest pain or discomfort) and shortness of breath.

Take your medication as you were told to. You should know what your medications are for and how and when to take them. Before you left the hospital a nurse or pharmacist should have spoken with you about your heart medications. You may not remember all the information you were told in the hospital. Your community pharmacist will discuss your medications with you.

Here are things you need to know about your medications:

- What each medication is for.
- How much to take.
- How often to take them.
- If they need to be taken at a certain time of day.
- If they interact with any foods or drinks.
- If they interact with any other medications you are taking, including over the counter medications and/or herbal products.

TIP: It is a good idea to have a list of your medications and dosages and carry it with you.

HOW TO TAKE YOUR BLOOD PRESSURE

Two is the magic number!

- Sit down and relax for **two to five** minutes.
- Your **two** feet flat on the floor.
- Put the cuff **two** fingers above elbow crease, tight enough so you can only slip 2 fingers under the cuff. Your arm should be supported at heart level.
- Write down the **two** blood pressure numbers and your pulse or heart rate that the blood pressure machine displays in the calendar we gave you before you left the hospital.

There are two videos you can watch on how to take your blood pressure:

- https://www.instagram.com/reel/CfPBKLfghd7/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link
- <https://www.heartandstroke.ca/heart-disease/risk-and-prevention/condition-risk-factors/high-blood-pressure>

FOLLOW UP WITH YOUR PRIMARY CARE PROVIDER (Family doctor or nurse practitioner or ACCESS centre)

Follow up is important to continue your recovery. Your primary care provider will receive information about what happened to you while in the hospital.

- Call their office to see them within 4 weeks.
- Bring with you the discharge information, your blood pressure and heart rate readings and the medications you are currently.
- If you are still smoking, make sure you discuss this. There are ways to help you to quit smoking.



What's NEXT?

In the seven days, there is heart health information you will be asked to go through to help in your recovery. This includes the following:

1. Nutrition Monday
2. Physical Activity Tuesday
3. Risk Factors Wednesday
4. Mental Health Thursday
5. Medications Friday
6. Adapting To Living with Heart Disease Saturday
7. Cardiac Rehab Sunday

LEARN MORE

At the MB ACS Network website: <https://mbacsnetwork.ca/education> or scan the QR code.

