



Process of care

Patient information booklet

Process of care

This booklet describes the process of care for your stay at St Vincent's, from admission to the Cardiothoracic Care Centre to discharge following your surgery.

Day of admission

Activity

You will be admitted to the 4th floor Cardiothoracic Care Centre, Inpatient Services Building at St Vincent's.

You should notify the nurse if you experience any chest pain or discomfort.

Treatments

A member of the team will settle you into the ward and explain the process relating to your hospital stay. You will be seen by medical staff from the ward and the Anaesthetic Department.

In the evening you will have a preoperative clip around the operation area and shower with antibacterial solution (Hibiclens). You may have a sedative to settle. Routine medications will continue. Ask about any medication you are unfamiliar with.

Nutrition

You'll be able to have food and fluids as usual in the evening. The dietitian will discuss your diet at home after the operation.

Information

Your nurse will show you around the ward and explain the process relating to your hospital stay. They will take details such as your home situation and how you will be able to get home on discharge – this will be any time from 5 to 7 days post surgery.

They will also discuss issues or concerns you may have regarding surgery. There is an education video available for you and your family to view. This will provide an overview of what to expect in relation to the surgery and postoperative period.

Day of surgery (in the ward)

Activity

You will be given an injection or tablets before going to surgery (to help you relax). Once this is given you will need to remain in bed.

Time of surgery

There are two theatre sessions daily: morning and afternoon.

- Morning cases: patient leaves ward between 6:00 and 7:30am.
- Afternoon cases: patient leaves ward between 11:00 and 11:30am.

On the afternoon of your admission your nurse will be able to inform you of the time your operation is scheduled.

Treatments

Your nurse will keep you informed of expected time of surgery. Family members may come in and wait with you until you go to theatre. There is a lounge area designated for your family to wait while the operation is in progress, where the surgeon will come and see the family after the operation.

Nutrition

You will be fasting from 12:00 midnight.

Information

The nurse will assist you to get ready for surgery. Don't hesitate to ask questions if you are unsure of anything.

Day of surgery (after surgery in intensive care)

Activity

Following your operation you will be transferred back to the Intensive Care Unit (ICU). You'll be resting in bed for the next 24 hours. The nurse will be there to assist you to change your position.

Treatments

You will wake up in ICU. One nurse will be caring for you over this time. You will have a breathing tube in your mouth and throat; you'll be unable to speak or drink. This tube will normally be removed 4 to 8 hours after surgery – once you start breathing on your own.

You will require oxygen via a face mask for the next 48 hours. There will be a drip in your neck providing fluids. Two chest drains will be draining from the operation site into a collection bottle, and you will also have a tube draining your bladder. These normally are removed day 2 after surgery.

You will be connected to a cardiac monitor and staff will be taking frequent observations, checking limb

movements and measuring drainage over this 24 hour period.

Nutrition

Once the breathing tube is removed you will be able to have ice and fluids as tolerated.

Information

After the surgeon has seen your family on the 4th floor they will be able to visit you in ICU. The ICU nurse and staff will explain the process and procedures to you as you progress through your stay.

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Day 1 post surgery (transferring back to cardiothoracic surgery ward)

Activity

By now you will be moving about a little more freely. You will still rest in bed but may sit up in the afternoon.

Treatments

Your nurse will be preparing to send you back to the 4th floor Cardiothoracic Care Centre after some of the drips are removed. The ICU ward round takes place at approximately 8:00am.

Once back in the Cardiothoracic Care Centre you will be connected to a heart monitor for the first 48–72 hours. The nurse will continue regular observations over this time. Your chest drain tubes and bladder tube may remain until tomorrow. You will be receiving fluids via a neck drip and morphine will be providing you with analgesia to minimise any pain. Your wound and chest drain site will remain covered with a dressing. You'll be seen by medical staff on ward round between approximately 5:30 and 7.30pm.

Nutrition

Depending on how you feel you will be able to have food and fluids as desired. You may experience a degree of nausea postoperatively which we are able to treat with regular medication.

Information

Over the day your nurse will keep you informed of your progress and any procedures which may be required. The physiotherapist will be in to see you today, and may sit you out of bed.

Day 2 post surgery

Activity

You'll be sponged in bed after your drips, drain tubes and catheter are removed this morning.

You will be assisted to sit out of bed for 1–3 hours and for meals in the afternoon.

Nutrition

Breakfast is at 7:00am. You may eat what you like.

Treatments

A busy morning ahead! The doctors will see you on the ward round at approximately 7:30am. Ward rounds occur twice a day for the rest of your stay (7:30am and 5:30pm are the approximate times). Your lines, chest drain tubes and bladder tube will all be removed this morning.

For pain relief you'll have regular Panadol plus Endone for the next 2–3 days. Remember to let nursing staff know if you are not getting pain relief from these drugs. All your wound dressings will be removed and cleaned with normal saline and

covered with a small dressing if required (chest and legs).

Cardiac patients undergoing bypass surgery

Your nurse will be measuring your fluid intake and output. We need to restrict the total amount of fluid intake to 1,500ml/day to reduce the workload on your heart.

Information

Your nurse will be providing ongoing advice about your progress. You'll be seen by a physiotherapist who will assist you with breathing exercises while you sit out of bed, and who will take you for a short walk.

Day 3 post surgery

Activity

The nurses will assist you to the shower in the morning. Today you will be sitting out of bed for 2–5 hours. The physiotherapist/nurses will assist you to commence your walking program.

Treatments

If you have any problems or your plans for discharge home have not been arranged, please discuss this with the nurse caring for you today (day 3).

Don't forget to ask for pain relief if it is required. You will be weighed daily. We continue to measure your fluid intake and output. Your nurse will be doing regular observations. Today the heart monitor will be discontinued if there are no problems with your heart rate. The oxygen is normally discontinued today. Your nurse will advise you on these.

Nutrition

Following surgery you may lose your appetite. This is a side effect of medication. You will commence a low fat/low salt diet to reduce the risk of heart disease and keep your weight under control.

If you feel you are not eating much, discuss this with your nurse – it may take a few days to get your appetite back. A dietitian is available for discussion regarding maintaining diet at home.

Information

Ask your nurse about any concerns. He/she will be providing ongoing advice about your progress at this stage. Any new medications should be discussed with your nurse and pharmacist during your postoperative period and before you leave hospital.

Day 4 to discharge (day 6 or 7 post surgery)

Activity

Over the next 3–4 days you will be getting your strength back and increasing your degree of independence by showering and walking by yourself.

Nursing staff and the physiotherapist will be monitoring your progress. They will discuss issues with you such as exercise and diet in conjunction with the dietitian and the occupational therapist if needed.

Any plans for discharge should be finalised by day 5.

Treatments

Ward rounds take place at 7:30am and 5:30pm.

Wound care

By the time you leave hospital your wounds should be clean and dry. They will be left uncovered. A small amount of oozing will not prevent you from going home.

Sutures may be removed before discharge or by your GP, depending on your surgeon's preference. If you are diabetic your GP will be notified

to remove your sutures on day 10–14. Once home you may shower, allowing soap and water to run over the wounds but avoiding talc or creams. If any wound discharge develops after you are home please see your local doctor.

Medications

Your medications may be changed while you are in hospital. Ask your nurse about your medications.

The pharmacist is available on the floor. They will also discuss your medications with you prior to your discharge. You should have a good understanding of their action, dose, when to take them and what they are for before you go home.

The pharmacist will provide you with a printout of all current medications you will require on discharge. The hospital provides a supply of medication at standard pharmacy rates. You will need to visit your local doctor within a couple of days of discharge to ensure you are reviewed and that your medications are continued.

Nutrition

Your appetite will be returning to normal over this time. You may have problems with constipation after surgery due to medications, anaesthetic and loss of appetite. We'd encourage fluids (1,500ml/day) and high fibre foods. Tell your nurse if you have not had your bowels open for 3–4 days.

Information

Your nurse will provide you with information (i.e. expectations post discharge) and be able to answer any queries regarding issues such as progress and medication. Use your information booklet for details.

Your physiotherapist will arrange for a follow-up cardiac rehabilitation program at a location convenient to you. Follow-up appointments will be made with your cardiologist and surgeon approximately 4–6 weeks following discharge. This information will be given to you on your day of discharge.

You will usually be supplied with one month's supply of medication at standard pharmacy rates.

Your GP will be sent a copy of your discharge letter regarding your surgery and postoperative progress information.

Questions after discharge

If you have any queries or problems after discharge, ring us at the Cardiothoracic Care Centre on (03) 9288 4621 and we should be able to advise you.

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St Vincent's

*Continuing the Mission of
the Sisters of Charity*

May 2010

Mission

Our health service is based on and driven by our quest for:
Compassion – Justice – Human Dignity – Excellence – Unity