



FREE PRINTABLE FROM THE CARDIAC SURGERY PLAYBOOK

Home Preparation Checklist

Most people go home about four to seven days after heart surgery. Set up your home before the operation so the first weeks are easier and safer.

Your resting space

- ☐ Set up a resting spot, ideally on the main floor
- ☐ Keep phone, water, glasses, and medicines within easy reach
- ☐ Have a firm chair with arms, or a recliner, that is easy to get out of
- ☐ Move everyday items to between waist and shoulder height, so you do not reach high or bend low

Safety

- ☐ Clear loose rugs, cords, and clutter from walkways
- ☐ Add night lights between the bedroom and the bathroom
- ☐ Put a shower chair and a non-slip mat in the shower
- ☐ Consider a handheld shower head

Supplies

- ☐ Cook and freeze several simple meals with protein
- ☐ A thermometer and a bathroom scale for daily checks
- ☐ A weekly pill box
- ☐ Your care team's phone numbers posted by the phone

Help from others

- ☐ A ride home from the hospital
- ☐ Someone with you around the clock for about the first week
- ☐ Help with groceries, laundry, pets, trash, and rides for several weeks
- ☐ Transportation to follow-up visits and cardiac rehab
- ☐ Time off arranged with your employer

You will usually not drive for about four to six weeks or lift more than a few pounds for six to eight weeks after surgery through the breastbone. Minimally invasive operations can shorten some of these times, and some programs now allow fewer sternal precautions and earlier driving. Check with your own care team. Let pain be your guide: if an activity hurts, stop and let the bone heal.

More free answers at cardiacsurgeryplaybook.com · *The Cardiac Surgery Playbook* by Daniel T. Engelman, MD, Cheryl Crisafi, MSN, RN, and Armando Paez, MD, in paperback, hardcover and Kindle on Amazon.

General education, not medical advice. Follow your own care team's instructions. In an emergency, call 911.