Cardiac Surgery
Inpatient Discharge Instructions

Follow-up: Please call at least one business day in advance if you need to change your appointment time.

UF Health Surgical Specialists is located at:
UF Health Shands Hospital – 1st floor
1600 SW Archer Road
Gainesville, FL 32610

Please call 352.265.5470 if you have any problems or questions following discharge
After hours, please call 352.265.0111 and ask for the cardiothoracic resident on call.

Diet: You may resume a regular healthy diet with a cardiac diet focus as below:

- Sodium no more than 2400 mg/day, or about a teaspoon of salt.
- Eat foods, such as fruits and vegetables, low in saturated fat and low in transfat.
- Avoid man-made fats used in foods, such as artificial butter and prepared baked goods, and all processed foods.
- Fluid: Do not drink more than 1.75 liters or 60 ounces of fluid per day.

Activity: Increase your activity level gradually.
- Walking is a good form of light exercise; go for a walk at 1 to 3 times per day.
- No strenuous exercise until cleared by your physician.
- No swimming until wound is fully-healed.
- No driving for 4 weeks.
- No sexual intercourse for 4 weeks.
- No driving or operating motorized vehicles while on prescription pain medications.
- Follow sternal precautions (no lifting, pulling, pushing anything greater than 10 pounds) for a full 8 weeks from day of surgery.
- Return to work when cleared by MD/PA/ARNP.

Bathing: Shower daily.
- Gently let soap and water run over your incision and pat dry.
- Do not scrub the incision/wound.
- Do not soak in a bath until your incision is healed and evaluated by your physician at follow-up.
- Chest tube suture sites can be left open to air with no dressing covering them during shower.

Wound Care: General Instructions
- If you have a dressing, it can be removed a day after discharge.
- You may leave your incision open to air.
- Keep your incision clean and dry.
- No lotions, creams, ointments, or powders on incisions until they are well-healed.
- You have glue over the incision(s) that will fall off on its own; do not pick it off.
Bowel regimen for constipation:

People who undergo surgery are likely to develop post-operative constipation. Exposure to narcotics and changes in diet, fluid intake and physical activity are known contributors to constipation. We recommend routine stool softeners and laxatives after surgery for most patients. These medications are over-the-counter and do not require a prescription:

Colace is a stool softener. We recommend starting at 100mg orally twice per day as needed for soft stools and increase to a maximum of 200mg twice daily as needed.

Senna is a laxative that works by keeping water in the intestine to help stool move along the intestinal tract. Take 1 tablet daily as needed for soft stool and increase to a maximum of 2 tablets twice daily as needed. Take Senna with 2 full glasses of water each time.
Miralax, Ducolax and milk of magnesia are other over-the-counter laxatives that may be used as needed for post-operative constipation.

Drink 6 to 8 glasses of water per day.
Consume 15 to 30g of fiber per day.
Metamucil powder, 1 to 2 tablespoons 1 to 2 times/day OR
Benefiber powder, 2 tablespoons 4 times/day
Avoid straining.

Call 352.265.5470 immediately if you have any of the following symptoms:

- Pain that gets worse or is not relieved by medication.
- Warmth, redness or swelling in the skin around the wound.
- Foul drainage from incision.
- Extensive bruising or discoloration.
- Wound that opens up or pulls apart.
- Fever above 101.5°F or shaking and chills.
- Nausea or vomiting.
- Severe diarrhea or severe constipation.
- Dizziness or fainting.
- Chest pain, shortness of breath, or increased work of breathing.
- Weight gain more than 5 pounds over 3 to 4 days.
- Inability to urinate for more than 6 hours.
- Cloudy or smelly urine.
- Sternal clicking, popping or shifting.