Discharge Instructions after Heart Surgery

PLEASE CALL CONGENITAL HEART (formerly PCA) IF:

• Your child has a fever of 101 orally or rectally or has chills
• The incision is painful, opens up, has cloudy yellow or green drainage or has a bad smell, or is red and the redness is spreading
• Your child has trouble breathing or has color changes (gray, pale or blue) of the skin, not lips or fingernails
• You have any questions about medications
• Your child has vomiting and/or diarrhea
• Your child has trouble eating, tires easily while eating or is not interested in eating at all
• Your child has signs of dehydration; dry mouth, no tears, little or no urine output

ACTIVITY RESTRICTIONS

INFANTS
• No daycare until after the first follow-up visit
• Make sure all visitors and family members wash their hands prior to coming in contact with your child
• No contact with visitors or family members with flu-like or cold symptoms
• Do not lift your child from under the arms for 6-8 weeks. Rather, scoop from their bottom and back
• Young infants may do “tummy time” after 4 weeks

CHILDREN
• No daycare/school until after the first follow-up visit
• May swim in:
  o Private pools: 2 weeks
  o Public pool/lake/ocean: 4 weeks
• No gym class, playground, skiing or bike riding for 6 weeks
• No lifting items greater than 10 pounds for 6 weeks
• Do not lift your child using his/her underarms for 6-8 weeks. Rather scoop from their bottom and back

YOUNG ADULTS
• No school or work until after the first follow-up visit
• No driving for 6 weeks
• No gym class or competitive sports for a minimum of 6 weeks, you will need permission from your cardiologist prior to returning to competitive sports
• No lifting items greater than 20 pounds, including backpacks, for 6 weeks

WOUND CARE
• Gently clean the incision daily with soap and water
• Dry the incision well by patting with a clean soft towel
• Tub baths and showers may be taken five days after surgery. Submerging the wound in a bathtub or hot-tub should not be done until the scab is off of the wound and there are no open areas.
• No ointments or other home remedies should be applied to the incision until the scab is off of the wound.
• If your child goes home with “stitches,” they will be removed by Dr. Quinn at the first visit. Do not cut or trim “stitches” at home. A protruding stitch, especially at the top of the wound is not abnormal and should be left alone.

***Please notify the office if there is excessive redness, swelling, drainage or tenderness at the surgical site***

IMMUNIZATIONS

Please wait until after your first post-surgery visit before resuming your immunization schedule. Live vaccines (including MMR and Varicella) should be delayed for 6 weeks after surgery. Some patients will require a vaccine called Synagis to protect them from RSV during the winter months. Your cardiologist will discuss whether or not your child will need this vaccine.
DENTAL CARE AND PROCEDURES

• No dental cleanings or scheduled surgeries for 3 months after heart surgery
• Between 3 and 6 months after surgery, antibiotics should be taken before dental procedures and before scheduled or emergency procedures
• Antibiotics are used to prevent an infection called bacterial endocarditis. This is referred to as SBE prophylaxis

***Please ask your cardiologist about The American Heart Association guidelines for SBE prophylaxis***

IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS

• Congenital Heart (formerly PCA)
  o 207-883-5532
• Pediatric Cardiac Surgery (Dr. Quinn)
  o 207-773-8161

FOLLOW-UP APPOINTMENTS

Congenital Heart

71 US Route 1, Suite C, Scarborough, ME 04074

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Pediatric Cardiac Surgery

818 Congress Street, Portland, ME 04102

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