

## Can I go on holiday abroad?

Most airlines will allow you to fly six weeks after heart surgery but you should check with the individual airlines. Make sure you get comprehensive travel insurance that includes repatriation (returning home). You must declare your heart condition to your insurance company. Further information regarding travel can be found at [www.thesf.org.uk](http://www.thesf.org.uk)

## When can I resume sexual activity?

Whenever you feel able to but ensure that you chose a position that does not put pressure on your chest. If you get palpitations or feel more breathless contact your nurse specialist for advice. Females should ensure they have appropriate contraception.

## Other information

### Wi-Fi

Free hospital Wi-Fi is available for patients, please ask a member of staff for details.

### Television

Cards are available to buy at machines throughout the hospital.

### Car-parking

Weekly passes are available through the Q-park office in the car park.

### Ward visiting times

Visiting times are between the hours of 14.30 – 19.30.

A maximum of 3 visitors per patient is allowed at any one time. Children under 16 years must be accompanied by an adult.

## Accommodation

There are a small number of rooms in Nuffield House for relatives to stay in. There is a charge for these. Please contact the Accommodation Manager for further information.

**Tel: 0121 3714524**

If you have any additional questions or concerns, please contact the ACHD nurses in advance of the admission.

## Contact details

### ITU – Area D

Tel: 0121 371 2805

### Ward 306

Tel: 0121 371 3199

### ACHD nurses

Tel: 07768 801095

[achdnurses@uhb.nhs.uk](mailto:achdnurses@uhb.nhs.uk)



The Trust provides free monthly health talks on a variety of medical conditions and treatments. For more information visit [www.uhb.nhs.uk/health-talks.htm](http://www.uhb.nhs.uk/health-talks.htm) or call 0121 371 4323.

---

**Adult Congenital Heart Disease Unit**  
**Queen Elizabeth Hospital Birmingham**  
Mindelsohn Way, Edgbaston  
Birmingham, B15 2GW  
Telephone: 0121 371 2000

---



**University Hospitals Birmingham**  
NHS Foundation Trust



## Building healthier lives

### UHB is a no smoking Trust

To see all of our current patient information leaflets please visit [www.uhb.nhs.uk/patient-information-leaflets.htm](http://www.uhb.nhs.uk/patient-information-leaflets.htm)

## Your hospital stay

Following your heart operation you will go to the Intensive Care Unit (ICU). On ICU you will be connected to a ventilator which takes over your breathing until you are fully awake and able to breathe for yourself. This is usually later the same day or the following morning. You will be closely monitored by the nursing staff and observations including blood pressure, oxygen levels and heart rate are recorded constantly. Your doctors and nurses will give you medication to manage any pain that you may experience.

Once well enough, all of the tubes and lines are removed and you will be moved to the cardiothoracic ward, Ward 306. Most people spend a couple of days on ICU following surgery, this varies from patient to patient.

We would expect you to be in hospital for about one week. However, sometimes this may be longer. Your Adult Congenital Heart Disease (ACHD) Team will see you each day and will start talking to you about going home early on to ensure you are fully prepared.

During your hospital stay, you will be encouraged to get up and walk as soon as possible. This is to reduce your risk of developing complications such as chest infections and deep vein thrombosis (DVT). It will also get you started on your cardiac rehabilitation. We will ensure that you are able to walk up and down one flight of stairs before you are discharged.

When it is time for discharge, your medications will be reviewed by your doctors. There may be some change to

your regular tablets and the nurses on the ward will explain all of the tablets you are to take. If you have started taking warfarin, we will arrange for you to be seen in your local anticoagulation clinic a couple of days after discharge. Your tablets will be reviewed again in your first outpatient appointment following surgery.

## General advice following heart surgery

1. Keep active but build your activity level up slowly. You will be referred to your local cardiac rehabilitation team for further advice
2. Avoid any heavy lifting for six months. The breast bone can take this long to fully heal
3. Ensure that you eat a healthy diet following discharge. If you are unsure what foods to eat, contact your specialist nurses for advice
4. Keep an eye on all of your wounds. If you notice any redness or discharge, contact your GP, Ward 306 or your specialist nurse
5. Wear your TED (compression) stockings for at least four weeks to reduce your risk of developing a DVT
6. Be aware of your heart. If it feels irregular or fluttery or you think it is racing you need to see your GP or contact the ACHD team
7. Female patients should wear a non-wired sports bra following surgery to support the breasts and reduce discomfort

8. Do not run out of tablets. Make sure you see your GP for another prescription in plenty of time

## Common questions following heart surgery

### When will I be seen again in clinic?

We will review you approximately six weeks after your discharge. At this appointment we will find out how you are getting on, review your tablets and have a look at your wound. It is important to mention any concerns that you may have at this appointment.

### When am I allowed to drive again?

The DVLA states that driving is prohibited for six weeks following heart surgery for a group 1 (private vehicle) licence. You do not need to inform them. If you hold a group 2 (HGV) licence, then you should discuss this with the DVLA prior to your surgery.

### When can I return to work?

This will depend on your job but we usually recommend a minimum of 2-3 months off work following surgery. This allows your body to fully heal and for you to build up your fitness again. We would advise you to discuss returning to work with your employers and many patients opt for a phased return.