



Discharge Advice Following Cardiac Ablation: Atrial Arrhythmia

Returning home

When discharged home, we recommend you rest for a few days following your ablation. It is normal to experience chest discomfort and groin tenderness for a few days after the procedure. This usually resolves with simple pain killers, such as paracetamol, which can be taken to help manage this. Do not take ibuprofen if you are on an anticoagulant (blood thinner).

Palpitations and short episodes of arrhythmia may also occur up to 12 weeks post procedure. This is very common and attributed to procedural inflammation. It does not suggest the procedure has failed. This should settle as your heart continues to heal. Mild migraines, with or without visual disturbance, may occur in the first two weeks post procedure and typically resolve spontaneously with adequate hydration.

Wound care

Keep the wound and dressing dry and do not remove the dressing until 48 hours after your procedure. You can shower at this point, but you should not have a bath or immerse your legs in water for at least one week following the ablation. There is no need to apply any creams to the wound site. Additional dressings will be supplied and can be used if required.

- ☐ We have accessed the femoral vein (groin).
- ☐ We have accessed the femoral artery (groin).
- ☐ An angio-seal device has been used to close the blood vessel. This will dissolve in 90 days. Please carry the angio-seal information card with you for the next three months.

If your puncture starts to ooze, lie down and press firmly on the puncture site for 10 minutes to help stop the bleeding. If the wound continues to bleed despite this, or bleeds excessively, lie down and call an ambulance immediately.

It is normal for a small pea-sized lump to develop beneath the puncture site. This will heal in four to eight weeks. If the lump gets larger or there are signs of infection such as redness, swelling or heat, contact the nurse specialists on the number provided.

Physical activity and lifestyle

Avoid any lifting, stretching or strenuous exercise for one to two weeks post procedure as this increases pressure in the groin area, making it more likely the puncture will bleed. After two weeks we recommend resuming gentle exercise, in combination with a healthy balanced diet, to reduce the risk of arrhythmia recurrence post procedure.

Driving and flying

Please follow the DVLA driving restriction which applies to you following catheter ablation (ticked):

- ☐ The DVLA recommends that you do not drive for 48 hours post procedure, although we recommend refraining from driving for one week. You do not need to inform the DVLA, although you must tell the DVLA if your arrhythmia affects your driving.
- ☐ You have a history of congenital heart disease; you must not drive for four weeks post procedure. The DVLA should already be aware of your cardiac condition if you are symptomatic of it.
- ☐ You hold a HGV licence. You must not drive for two weeks post procedure. You do not need to inform the DVLA.
- ☐ You hold a HGV licence and have a history of congenital heart disease; you must stop driving for three months and inform the DVLA. This can be achieved by filling out a VOCH1 form and sending it to DVLA. The DVLA should already be aware of your cardiac condition.
- ☐ Your unique history warrants the following specific driving restriction described below:



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We recommend that you do not fly within seven days of your ablation.

Returning to work

If you work, we recommend you take one to two weeks off. People recover at different rates following ablation depending on the type of ablation, general health, fitness and medication taken. We can provide a sick note for your employer prior to discharge if required. Extensions that exceed 14 days should be reassessed and issued by your GP practitioner.

When to seek help

- If you experience severe chest pain, severe shortness of breath, a persistent heart rate above 130bpm, or any loss of consciousness, please present to your local emergency department.
- If you experience issues with swallowing please contact the Arrhythmia Specialist Nurse team.
- If you experience a sustained abnormal rhythm but feel well, please contact the Arrhythmia Specialist Nurse team.

Follow up

We will arrange to see you in a follow-up appointment in the Arrhythmia Clinic in three to six months. The details of this appointment will be sent by post or text based on your preferences.

Department contact information:

Arrhythmia Nurse Specialist team (Mon-Fri 8-5)
Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

0121 371 2511/ 07393 762 322
0121 371 3280

Accessibility

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