

Support

You are logged in as: TAMC Staff

[Log out](#)

Search Krames On-Demand

Search

[Advanced Search](#)[Browse](#)[Folders](#)[Medications](#)[Education Cart](#)Account Name: [Tripler Army Medical Center](#)**Action**

Print

Normal

English (En)

No Duplicate

Go

Action for Selected Items

Text Size

Language

Print Duplicate

Personalize with patient's name:

Personalize with special instructions:

82037

After Coronary Artery Bypass Surgery

When you leave the hospital after coronary artery bypass surgery, you'll be given discharge instructions. These tell you how to take care of yourself as you recover. Staying active will help speed recovery, so do as much as you comfortably can. To protect your healing breastbone, though, you will likely need some help from others.

Getting Back Into Your Routine

Follow your doctor's guidelines. Here are some general time frames:

- **Showering.** Unless you're told otherwise, you can shower once you get home. Don't use very hot water (it can make you dizzy). Have someone nearby in case you need help. Don't take a tub bath until your doctor says it's okay.
- **Daily activities.** Resume activities as you feel comfortable doing so. Within a few days you can return to light activities, such as cooking. Don't do anything strenuous, such as mowing the lawn or vacuuming, for at least 6 weeks.
- **Driving.** Don't drive until your doctor says you can. This will be around 3–6 weeks after surgery. This is important for many reasons. Soreness or stiffness may make driving uncomfortable. And you shouldn't drive when you're taking pain medication.
- **Work.** How soon you can return to work depends on your job. You may be told you can return to work 3–12 weeks after surgery.
- **Sexual intercourse.** Avoid sex for 4–6 weeks. When you do have sex, use positions that don't strain your breastbone. Talk to your doctor if you're concerned.



To protect your breastbone, ask family members for help reaching high shelves.

Caring for Your Incisions

Your incisions may be bruised, itchy, numb, and sore. After a shower, pat them dry (don't rub). Don't use lotion or powder. Be sure to check the incisions every day. This way you'll see any signs of problems early.

As Your Breastbone Heals

Don't be surprised if you feel sharp pains in your chest as your breastbone heals. You may also notice that changes in the weather make your incision hurt. These pains feel different from angina and are most likely not signs of a heart attack. If you have questions about what you're feeling, or if your pain isn't managed by medication, call your healthcare provider.

© 2000-2011 Krames StayWell, 780 Township Line Road, Yardley, PA 19067. All rights reserved. This information is not intended as a substitute for professional medical care. Always follow your healthcare professional's instructions.



VERSION 5.0 | © 2011 The StayWell Company

[Back to Top](#)