Caring for your child at home after cardiac catheterisation

In the days after your child’s discharge from hospital after cardiac catheterisation, it’s important to follow these observation and care guidelines. If you have any questions or concerns about your child’s care, don’t hesitate to contact us.

Signs of bleeding or infection
Regularly check your child for any of the following:
■ bleeding directly from the site and/or oozing out from under the dressing,
■ excessive bruising at the insertion site (Note: a small amount of bruising is normal),
■ swelling / haematoma (if the site becomes suddenly more swollen with a hard lump under the skin, there may be bleeding into the tissues around the puncture site),
■ redness and/or heat at the insertion site (this can indicate infection),
■ temperature over 37.5°C;

If your child is taking/commencing blood thinning medication bruising around the site maybe more pronounced.

If you do observe bleeding from the insertion site, a large haematoma develops or new swelling, take these steps:
1. Lie your child flat
2. Apply pressure to groin for at least 10 minutes. Do not keep removing pressure to check site.
3. If swelling/bleeding/oozing persists after 10 minutes, call 000 and ask for an ambulance. Keep pressure applied until the ambulance arrives.
4. If the bleed is large, ring 000 for ambulance.
5. Keep pressure applied until the ambulance arrives.

Pain relief
It is not unusual for your child to experience some mild pain after the procedure. This should settle down over a few hours/days.
Give your child Panadol as directed when they are discharged from hospital.
If the pain is not relieved by Panadol call the Catheter Coordinator or your Cardiac Care Coordinator on 07 30681765

How can I reduce the risk of bleeding and bruising?
Encourage your child to:
■ Avoid knocking or bumping the site.
■ Avoid contact sport for 72 hours post the procedure.
■ Avoid vigorous physical activity such as running and jumping.
■ Watch TV/DVDs and/or play computer games, read for a couple of days.
■ Leave the area dry for 48 hours – eg, do not swim or take a bath.
■ Do not apply creams/lotions/oils.

What to do if my child’s leg becomes swollen or they say that it feels different?
■ Ask the child to move their leg and wiggle their toes.
■ Ask the child to describe the sensation that they are experiencing.
■ Check that the child’s feet and toes are warm and pink.

If your child is taking/commencing blood thinning medication bruising around the site maybe more pronounced.
- Compare the size of their limb to the other side.
- If your child reports any different sensation to the other limb, has difficulty moving their legs or toes or feet are cold and pale they should be reviewed by a doctor.

**My child seems very tired – should I be worried?**

It is normal for a child recovering from an anaesthetic and a medical procedure to feel tired and lack energy for seven to 10 days afterwards.

Remember, they have been:
- exposed to an anaesthetic
- lost some blood
- been required to fast
- under stress during the lead up to the procedure
- required to travel a distance to be here.

If you are unsure of your child’s behaviour, attend your local health care provider or ring your catheter coordinator or Cardiac Care Coordinator on 07 3068 1765.

**What is the medical follow-up after my child has been discharge?**

After discharge a follow-up appointment will be required either at the Lady Cilento Children’s Hospital or at your regional hospital. A member of the Queensland Paediatric Cardiac Service team will follow-up with a phone call to ensure you are aware your child’s continuing care plan.

**What if I am unsure of my child’s condition?**

If you have any questions or are unsure about your child’s condition ring the QPCS and ask to speak with the Catheter Coordinator or your Cardiac Care Coordinator, visit your GP.

**If your child had an interventional catheter procedure…**

They may require continued medication after discharge to assist with keeping the blood thin. Our staff will provide you with additional information and education about this before your child’s discharge to help you care for them at home safely.

**Contact us**

Queensland Paediatric Cardiac Service
Lady Cilento Children’s Hospital
501 Stanley Street, South Brisbane
T: 07 3068 2790
T: 07 3068 1111 (hospital switchboard)

*In an emergency, always contact 000 for immediate assistance.*

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All information contained in this sheet has been supplied by qualified professionals as a guideline for care only. Seek medical advice, as appropriate, for concerns regarding your child’s health.