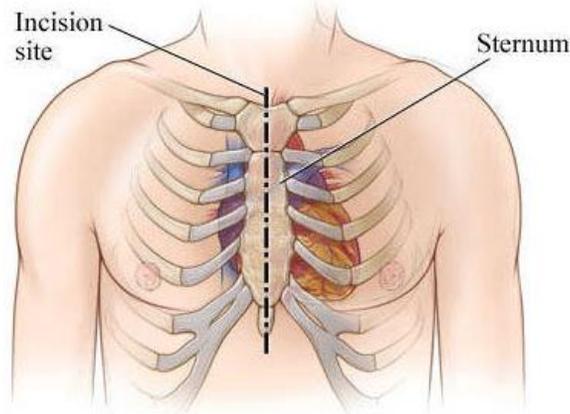


Sternal Precautions



What should I know?

After open heart surgery, you want to be aware of sternal precautions.

Sternal precautions include **No Pushing, No Pulling, No Lifting (greater than 5-10lbs:** Approximately less than a gallon of milk which is 8lbs) for 6 weeks post-surgical intervention or as specified by your doctor.

Continue to perform your activities of daily living including bathing, dressing and other self-care activities. You are able to lift your arms above 90 degrees (shoulder height) however avoid prolonged periods of time.

What should I avoid after surgery?

- No bowling, golfing, swimming or racquet sports until approved by your surgeon.
- No driving for 4 weeks.
 - When riding as a passenger, sit in the back seat. If you are unable to sit in the back seat, turn the air bag off and push the chair as far back as possible. You may use your heart pillow between your incision and seat belt for comfort.
- Strenuous activity (including but not limited to sexual activity and yard work) until approved by your physician.

Signs and symptoms of infection or complications

- “Clicking” sound from sternum area
- Fever
- Any separation of your incision
- Drainage and oozing from incision
- Warmth/redness at incision site

****If you have any of these signs and symptoms call your doctor as soon as possible**

Taking care of your incision

- Avoiding water pressure directly hitting your incision (you can allow water to rinse over incision).
- Do not apply lotions, powders, creams or ointments to incision.
- Use antibacterial soap (gently pat incisional area to clean/dry). Avoid scrubbing near or around your incision.
- Avoid picking at the site (allow the surgical glue to fall off naturally).
- Do not soak/submerge in water until incision is healed or approved by your doctor.

You will follow up with your surgeon approximately 1 month post-surgery. Please refer to your follow up appointment time provided in your discharge packet.