After Cardiac Ablation

Your child has had an electrophysiology study and a cardiac ablation. This was done to evaluate your child’s heart rhythm and to cure his arrhythmia. 3 to 5 long catheters were passed through the skin into blood vessels, usually in both groins and the right side of the neck. Then the catheters were gently guided into the heart. The heart’s electrical system was then “mapped” by placing catheters in specific locations in the heart and by pacing the heart. When an extra pathway or irritable site was located, low frequency radio waves (or cooled energy) are used to destroy the pathway or irritable site. This was done to cure your child of his fast heart rate.

After the procedure, your child went to the Post Anesthesia Recovery Room for about 1-2 hours to wake up from the anesthesia. Your child will need to stay in bed for 4 to 5 hours. It is important that your child not bear down, push himself up in bed or cough hard for a long time. These actions cause internal pressure that could cause the catheter sites to bleed. Your child will have a large pressure bandage on each side of the groin when he wakes up after the procedure. These will stay in place for 4 to 5 hours, while your child is in bed. They will be removed before your child is sent home. Your child will be able to read, watch TV or videos, or play video games while in bed.

Home care:

The catheter sites will heal completely in about 10 days. Report any of the following to your child’s cardiologist.

- Any redness, swelling, drainage, warmth or increased pain at the catheter sites
- Temperature of 101.5° F (38.6° C) or higher

Activity/Comfort:

- Because the procedure takes about 4 to 6 hours, your child may feel stiff with sore muscles from lying still for so long. Have your child take it easy the night of the procedure. He should walk and climb stairs as little as possible.
- Acetaminophen (Tylenol®) or ibuprofen (Advil® or Motrin®) will help with this discomfort. Be sure to follow the package instructions for the amount to give based on your child’s weight and age. Do not give more than 5 doses of acetaminophen or 4 doses of ibuprofen in 24 hours.
- Your child should rest or only have light activity the day after the procedure. 2 days after the procedure, your child may resume all normal activities, except bathing and swimming.

Bathing/Swimming:

- Your child may shower the day after the procedure.
- Short baths are fine, but no longer than 10 minutes for at least 10 days.
- Your child should not go swimming for at least 10 days after the procedure.

Bandage/Dressing:

- Keep a clean bandage over the catheter sites for 2 to 3 days.
- Keep the sites clean and dry after the bandage is removed.
Follow-up information:

Your child’s next appointment is on ___/___/____ at ______________ a.m./p.m. This appointment will be at ___________________ Cardiology Clinic. It is important to keep this appointment. If for some reason you cannot keep this appointment, please call the Electrophysiology (EP)Nurse at (816) 234-3255.

Call The Children’s Mercy Hospital at (816) 234-3000 and ask for the cardiologist on call if:

- There is redness, swelling or drainage at the catheter sites.
- Your child has a fever of 101.5°F (38.6°C) or higher.
- Your child has increased pain at the catheter sites.
- Your child has numbness or tingling in the legs.
- There is any bleeding from the catheter sites.
- Any irregularity in your child’s heart rhythm is noted.
- An abnormally slow heart rate is noted.

Important phone numbers:

Cardiology Clinic: (816) 234-3880
Toll free number to hospital operator: (866) 512-2168
Children's Mercy South Cardiology Clinic: (913) 696-8700

Other special instructions:

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