

Appointments and Lab Results

In addition to calling our office to set up appointments, we also have a number of options available on our website www.southdenver.com. Go to www.southdenver.com, click on the Patient Portal button and set up your account. Patients are then able to access their medical records, request an appointment, receive appointment reminders, get lab and diagnostic test results and pay their bills online.

SOUTH DENVER CARDIOLOGY ASSOCIATES, P.C.

Discharge Guidelines



South Denver Heart Center

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Littleton CO 80120

Porter Office

2535 S.Downing St., #460
Denver CO 80210

Swedish Office

499 E Hampden #280
Englewood CO 80110

Swedish Southwest Office

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Littleton CO 80120

303.744.1065

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This booklet will provide you with a brief summary of guidelines to be used as a reference after your discharge. Keep in mind your healthcare provider may **adjust the time** that you may resume some of your activities during your recovery.

Admission Date: _____

Discharge Date: _____

Reasons for Admission/Procedures: _____

Risk Factors For Coronary Heart Disease

Tobacco use	Age & Gender – Males over 45 & Females over 55
High Blood Pressure	Abnormal Cholesterol Levels
Diabetes	Lack of Exercise
Family History	Obesity
Poor Nutrition Habits	High Stress Lifestyle

Risk Factor Goals

1. **Blood Pressure:** Our goal for blood pressure is 120/80 or below.
2. **Cholesterol:** Our goals are
 - Total:** less than 200
 - Triglycerides:** less than 150
 - HDL:** greater than 40
 - LDL:** equal to or less than 70

Check a fasting lipid profile (VAP) and liver profile six weeks after beginning or changing your cholesterol lowering medication.

DO NOT eat food twelve hours before the test. It is okay to drink water, but not other beverages.

DO NOT drink alcohol three days before the test.

DO NOT exercise the morning of the test.

Pacemaker/Defibrillator Implantation

A cardiology technician from the device clinic will contact you at home to schedule your pacemaker or defibrillator check-up. The device clinic number is 303-703-2139.

You can shower after two days, BUT leave the tape on the incision.

DO NOT apply lotions, powders, Vitamin E oil or aloe vera to the incision. **DO NOT** lift anything over 25 pounds for at least one month after your procedure.

DO NOT lift your arms above your head until you have been seen in the pacemaker clinic. It is okay to carefully wash your hair.

NOTIFY the pacemaker clinic if the incision becomes painful, swollen, hot to touch or if you see blood and/or pus.

NOTIFY the doctor's office if you feel lightheaded, dizzy, close to passing out or are experiencing symptoms similar to before your pacemaker was implanted.

NOTIFY the doctor's office if you have hiccups that do not go away.

Specific To Defibrillator Only

Any patient who has an ICD is at risk of having a life threatening, irregular heart rhythm. The ICD will save your life but may not prevent dizziness or fainting before it delivers a shock. If you have an ICD, carefully consider any activity where symptoms of dizziness or fainting may be dangerous because of the risk of injury. Examples would include, but are not limited to skiing, diving, rock climbing, swimming, working on ladders, operating heavy machinery, etc... The most common activity where restriction should be considered is driving. None of these activities are absolutely restricted and the decision to continue them must be made by you, keeping in mind the risk of possible injury. Please remember the reason we give this advice to patients is not because you have an ICD, but because you have a heart condition that causes you to need an ICD. If you have any questions, talk them over with the physician that put in your ICD.

After Your Angioplasty And Stent

You are now recovering from your procedure. We strongly recommend cardiac rehabilitation. Exercise is one of the best ways to help your heart heal and improve your general physical condition.

Activity Restrictions

24 hours: No driving for 24 hours after the procedure.

24-48 hours: Avoid multiple steps/stairs.

First week: A good rule is to resume normal activity at 50% of regular exertion levels the first week that you are home.

30 days: Restrict physical activity that causes you to break into a *heavy sweat/ heavy breathing* (this helps to protect the stent).

Return to work: You may return to work on the day after the procedure if the job *does not require* heavy physical exertion.

The following are some of the ways that will alert you to slow down or stop:

1. Your activity causes excessive shortness of breath.
2. Your activity causes chest, arm, neck, jaw, back discomfort or any other symptoms of angina.
3. Your activity causes palpitations, pounding or racing of your heart.

Follow-up Appointments

1. Call 303-744-1065 to schedule an appointment with an RN in 7-10 days with SDCA.
2. If starting rehab:
 - a. Call 303-715-2260 to schedule a consultation and treadmill stress test.
 - b. Follow-up with your cardiologist when your rehab program is finished.
3. If rehab is not elected:
 - a. Call 303-744-1065 to schedule an appointment with your cardiologist in 4-6 weeks.

EMERGENCY PHONE NUMBER: 911

Special Instructions

Seek immediate emergency medical treatment if any of the following occur:

1. Severe chest, arm, neck, jaw, or back discomfort, as well as any other symptoms of angina which are NOT relieved within 20 minutes of taking Nitroglycerin.
2. Extreme episodes of shortness of breath.
3. Sudden episodes of severe exhaustion and breaking out in a "cold sweat" which is unrelated to exercise.
4. Any fainting or blackout spells.

**Call your physician within 24 hours if you experience:
303-744-1065**

1. Weight gain of 3 pounds overnight or 5 pounds in three days.
2. Episodes of shortness of breath increasing in frequency.
3. Episodes of angina discomfort increasing in frequency. Let your doctor's office know if you need to use Nitroglycerin frequently.
4. Waking at night with episodes of shortness of breath or requiring more than the usual number of pillows to sleep comfortably.
5. Palpitations, pounding or racing of your heart.

Incision Care: Wrist or Groin

It is okay to shower. Avoid baths and soaking in any hot tubs for 3 days after your procedure.

No heavy lifting, pushing, pulling or straining for 3-4 days after the procedure.

Notify our doctor's office immediately if you should experience any of the following: fever, chills, redness, swelling, bleeding or pus at the catheterization incision site. Pain in the calf, discolorization, or numbness in your arm or leg.

General Guidelines

1. Stop Smoking

If you are a smoker and are having trouble stopping, ask our health care providers and your primary care provider for help.

2. Watch your weight

Weigh yourself daily before breakfast. Call with a weight gain of three pounds overnight or five pounds in three days. Extra pounds mean extra work for your heart.

3. Rest Periods

Space activities with rest periods. Do not try to do everything at one time. No heavy activity for one hour after meals.

4. Diet

Follow a diet low in fat and cholesterol. Contact your local American Heart Association (www.americanheart.org) for guidelines.

5. Caffeinated Beverages

Use caffeine in moderation or choose decaf beverages.

Particularly if you are on Coumadin, #6 is a very important guideline

6. Alcohol

Abstaining from alcohol is best. If you plan to have alcohol, do not exceed the following: 1-2 servings a day of a 4 oz glass of wine, 1 oz. of liquor or 12 oz. of beer.

7. Cold Weather

It is best when going out in the cold to wrap a scarf around your face and pre-warm the car.

8. CPR

We recommend that all family members be trained in CPR.

9. Diabetics

Please contact your PCP's office with questions.

10. MEDICATIONS: Continue all medications as directed by your healthcare provider. Your medications are extremely important in the healing process. For example, aspirin and plavix are very important medications in preventing blood clots from forming, especially with angioplasty and stent therapy. Follow the instructions given at discharge and please contact our office if you are advised to discontinue your medications at any time, especially aspirin therapy. It is best to carry a list of medications, doses and how many times daily you take the medication (include over the counter medications such as vitamins, supplements and herbs) with you in your wallet at all times. You should also note on your list of medications if you have any allergies and what type of allergic reaction occurred.

Return To Work Guidelines

If you have had a relatively small heart attack without complications, you may return to work in 2 weeks. Continue to follow exercise, lifting and exertional restrictions.

If you have had a complicated heart attack that has involved significant muscle loss, you may return to work in 4-6 weeks, depending on your recovery progress.

Driving Guidelines

After a heart attack, we encourage you to avoid heavy traffic times, bad weather conditions and have someone else in the vehicle with you.

Keep the following in mind:

1. If you have had a relatively small heart attack without complications, you may return to driving in 1 week.
2. If you have had a complicated heart attack that has involved significant muscle loss, you may return to driving in 2 weeks.

Follow-up Appointments

1. See your Primary Care Provider in 1-2 weeks.
2. Call 303-744-1065 to schedule an appointment with an RN in 7-10 days with SDCA.
3. If starting rehab:
 - a. Call 303-715-2260 to schedule a consultation and treadmill stress test.
 - b. Follow-up with your cardiologist when your rehab program is finished.
4. If rehab is not elected:
 - a. Call 303-744-1065 to schedule an appointment with your cardiologist in 4-6 weeks.

After Your Heart Attack

Exercise is one of the best ways to help your heart heal and improve your general physical condition.

General Guidelines

1. Avoid muscle-tensing exercises for the next 4-6 weeks.
 - a. No lifting objects over 10-15 pounds.
 - b. No working with the arms over your head for extended periods of time: Hanging drapes, washing windows, etc...
 - c. No vacuuming, sawing, shoveling, mowing, etc.
2. Walk on a level surface.
3. Altitude restrictions—If you plan to spend some time in the mountains during the next 4-6 weeks, contact your doctor's office to be sure it will be safe for you.
4. It is also advised not to strain during bowel movements. You may buy a stool softener over the counter at any pharmacy.

Activity Guidelines

WEEK 1

ALLOWED—Continue the same activities at home as in the hospital. Walk outside on a level surface. Initially walk 5-10 minutes at a slow pace two times daily. Walk up or down stairs once or twice each day if necessary. Perform only light household hobbies and activities: playing cards, preparing simple meals, etc...

WEEK 2

ALLOWED—Continue the same activities as week 1. Walk 10-15 minutes two times each day. Walk up and down stairs as tolerated. Increase household activities: light housekeeping, watering garden, etc... Light social activities: movies, restaurants, etc...

You should be starting the cardiac rehab program by the second or third week after hospital discharge.

WEEK 3

ALLOWED—Walk 20-25 minutes two times each day. Begin to resume daily activities.

WEEK 4

ALLOWED—Continue the same activities as week 3.

Angina

1. Angina is a discomfort that is caused by a lack of blood supply to the heart muscle. It can be brought on by anything that increases your heart rate and blood pressure. The most common causes of angina are physical exertion, stress, heavy meals, exposure to cold and high altitude.
2. Angina does not have to be severe pain. It can be located in the chest, arms, neck, jaw, or back. It is usually a pressure, tightness, feeling of indigestion, dull ache, shortness of breath, or whatever you experienced that brought you into the hospital.
3. Angina is usually relieved with rest.
4. Angina can last 1 to 20 minutes. If it lasts twenty minutes or longer and you have taken Nitroglycerin tablets without relief, **CALL 911** and go to the emergency department for evaluation **immediately**.
5. Fleeting chest pain that lasts only seconds is not angina.

Nitroglycerin

(0.4mg tab or 1 squirt under the tongue as needed for angina)

How it works: It relaxes blood vessels and allows increased blood flow to the heart and other parts of the body.

Possible side effects: Headache, dizziness, or lightheadedness especially if you stand too quickly.

Directions: When discomfort from angina occurs, stop, sit down, and rest. As your heart rate returns to normal your discomfort may go away. If angina continues after 3-5 minutes of rest, place 1 tablet of Nitroglycerin (Nitro) under your tongue. Wait 5 minutes, if the discomfort continues, place another Nitro tablet under the tongue. Wait another 5 minutes, if the discomfort remains, **CALL 911 IMMEDIATELY**. Please do not waste time trying to contact your health care professional.

Keep Your Nitroglycerin With You At All Times

Keep nitroglycerin in the original bottle from the pharmacy. Air, heat and sunlight will reduce this drugs' ability to work. Replace your supply after six months or by the expiration date on the bottle. If the medication should get wet or turns to powder, replace it immediately. Do not place any other medications in the bottle with your Nitroglycerin and do not keep it in the refrigerator. Nitro spray is not affected by light or heat and does not need to be replaced for two years.

Antiarrhythmic Ablation Guidelines

Antiarrhythmic medication—Every patient will be discharged with an antiarrhythmic drug for a least 4-6 weeks post ablation.

Anticoagulants (Blood Thinning Medication, such as Warfin or Pradaxa)—Continue for 3 months after your procedure. Aspirin is also frequently prescribed for this 3 month period.

Anti-acid Medications (Such as Prilosec and Prevacid)—Proton pump inhibitors will be prescribed for the first month after your ablation. Sucralafate may also be prescribed for the first few weeks after your ablation.

A **large breathing tube** will be prescribed at discharge. Please use the breathing tube several times hourly while awake as this will help prevent a common cause of fever after an ablation called Atelectais. It also may help prevent pneumonia.

The first few days after ablation: mostly bedrest and light activity. Strenuous exercise is discouraged for a month after your ablation until you are able to have a follow-up visit. Light activity, mostly rest, after an ablation is recommended for the first 2 to 3 weeks in order to give your groin a chance to heal.

Follow up will be arranged within 2-3 weeks and again at three months.

Call the office, if you experience:

- An episode of atrial fibrillation greater than 24 hrs.
- Fever
- Problem swallowing
- Chest Pain
- Anything that concerns you

The succes of your procedure is determined at 3 months. Patients often experience AFib in the first 3 months, that will often stop after this time period.

PFO/ASD Guidelines

Do not lift objects heavier than 10 pounds for 2 weeks. Avoid heavy exertion for the first month after implantation. No contact sports for one month.

You will take anti-platelet medications like Plavix for at least 3 months and 81 mg. of Aspirin daily indefinitely: It is important that you do not forget to take any of your mediation doses.

If you have any invasive or dental procedures over the next six months you need to take prophylactic antibiotics which can be prescribed by our office if needed. This includes dental work, orthopedic scopes, surgery, colonoscopy, etc.

Follow Up Includes:

- Echo at 4 weeks
- Visit with the physician 4 to 6 weeks
- A bubble study with echo at 6 months post procedure