



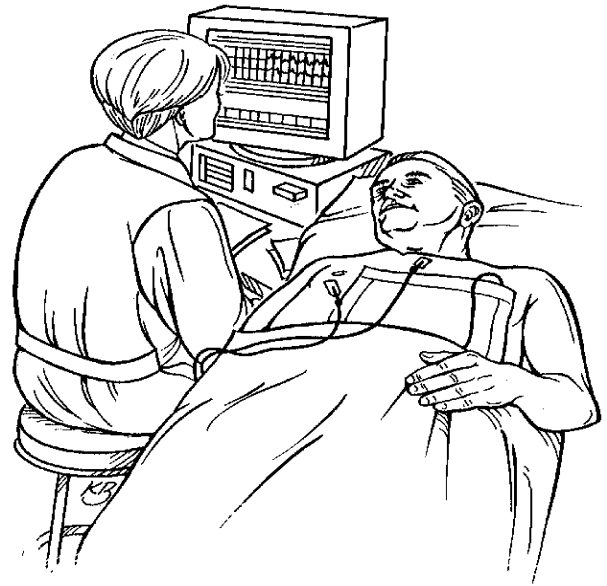
How Will I Be Monitored After Heart Surgery?

After open-heart surgery, you'll be in the Intensive Care Unit (ICU) where the hospital staff takes care of you 24 hours a day. Ask your doctor or nurse for another sheet like this that tells what happens after heart surgery and about what to expect in ICU.

During and after your surgery, you'll be watched closely by doctors and nurses and monitored by several devices. All of this helps ensure a safe, smooth recovery. Some of the devices used to monitor you are described below.

What is an ECG?

- An electrocardiogram, or ECG or EKG machine, records your heartbeat.
- Tiny wires, or electrodes, will be taped to your arms or shoulder and to your chest.
- Signals from the electrodes tell your doctor if your heart is beating normally.
- A highly trained nurse will watch the ECG at all times.
- You'll be hooked up to the ECG for several days.



What is an arterial line?

- This is a kind of catheter that's placed in an artery in the inside of your arm.
- It can continually monitor your blood pressure.
- It can tell your doctor how much oxygen is in your blood.
- It usually stays in for several days.

What is a Swan-Ganz catheter?

- This is a type of catheter used to tell doctors about the pressures inside your heart and in the artery to your lungs (pulmonary artery). It measures how well blood flows through the heart.
- It's put inside your heart through a vein in your neck and may stay there for several days.
- The spot where it's inserted is numbed first, so usually it doesn't hurt.
- You'll be awake while it's put in and you may feel some pressure in the neck.
- The process takes about 30 minutes.

What are chest tubes?

- During heart surgery, these thick tubes are put in your chest to drain fluid that seeps out from around the heart.
- Without these tubes, fluid (including blood) would build up inside your chest.
- The tubes are removed a couple of days after surgery.
- You'll be given medicine to relax you when the tubes are taken out. You may feel some discomfort.

How can I learn more?

1. Talk to your doctor, nurse or other health-care professionals. If you have heart disease or have had a stroke, members of your family also may be at higher risk. It's very important for them to make changes now to lower their risk.
2. Call 1-800-AHA-USA1 (1-800-242-8721) or visit americanheart.org to learn more about heart disease.
3. For information on stroke, call 1-888-4-STROKE (1-888-478-7653) or visit StrokeAssociation.org.
We have many other fact sheets and educational booklets to help you make healthier choices to reduce your risk, manage disease or care for a loved one.
Knowledge is power, so *Learn and Live!*

What are the warning signs of heart attack and stroke?

Warning Signs of Heart Attack

Some heart attacks are sudden and intense, but most of them start slowly with mild pain or discomfort with one or more of these symptoms:

- **Chest discomfort**
- **Discomfort in other areas of the upper body**
- **Shortness of breath with or without chest discomfort**
- **Other signs including breaking out in a cold sweat, nausea or lightheadedness**

Warning Signs of Stroke

- **Sudden weakness or numbness of the face, arm or leg, especially on one side of the body**
- **Sudden confusion, trouble speaking or understanding**
- **Sudden trouble seeing in one or both eyes**
- **Sudden trouble walking, dizziness, loss of balance or coordination**
- **Sudden, severe headache with no known cause**

Learn to recognize a stroke. Time lost is brain lost.

Call 9-1-1 Get to a hospital immediately if you experience signs of a heart attack or stroke!

Do you have questions or comments for your doctor?

Take a few minutes to write your own questions for the next time you see your doctor. For example:

What does it mean if an alarm goes off?

Can I see the monitors?

