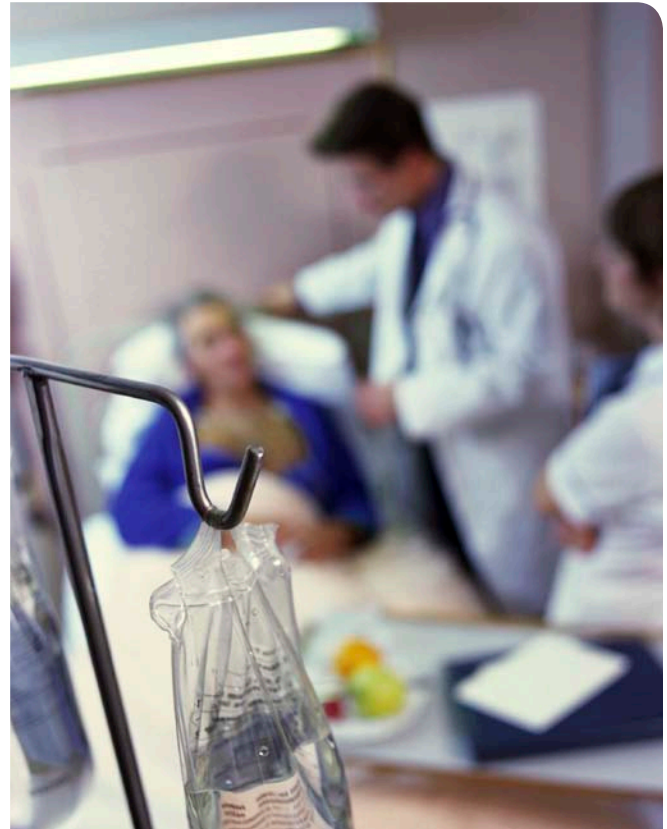




How Will I Be Monitored After Heart Surgery?

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, usually 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.

(continued)



- 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.

When can my family visit?

Your family members may visit briefly within 45 minutes or an hour after surgery. Their later visits must be arranged to fit the rules of the ICU.



HOW CAN I LEARN MORE?

- 1 Call **1-800-AHA-USA1** (1-800-242-8721), or visit **heart.org** to learn more about heart disease and stroke.
- 2 Sign up to get *Heart Insight*, a free magazine for heart patients and their families, at **heartinsight.org**.
- 3 Connect with others sharing similar journeys with heart disease and stroke by joining our Support Network at **heart.org/supportnetwork**.

Do you have questions for the doctor or nurse?

Take a few minutes to write your questions for the next time you see your healthcare provider.

For example:

What does it mean if an alarm goes off?

Can I see the monitors?

My Questions:

We have many other fact sheets to help you make healthier choices to reduce your risk, manage disease or care for a loved one. Visit **heart.org/answersbyheart** to learn more.