

# My TAVI

Including Before and  
After TAVI Care





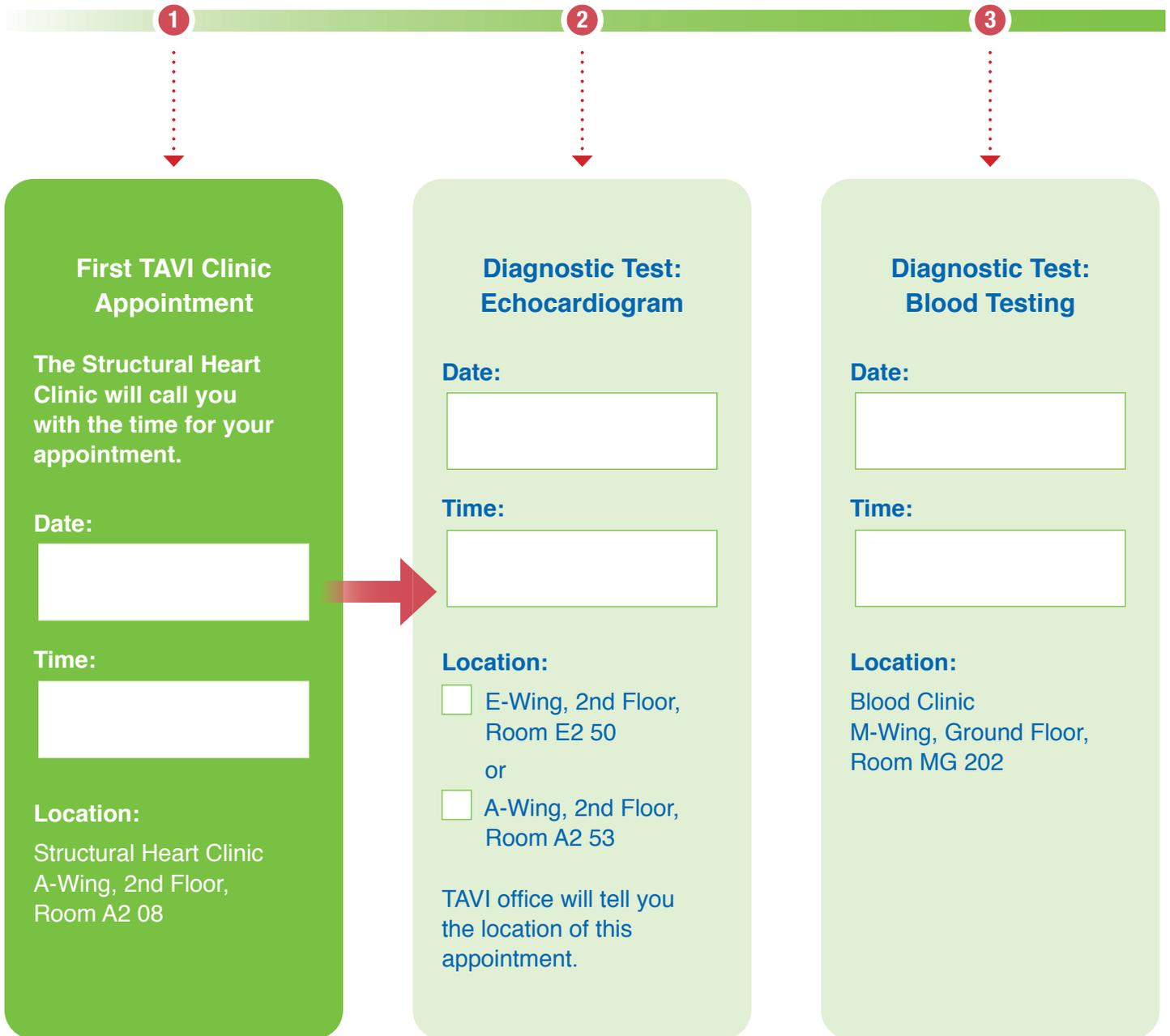
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## What is your preferred language?

Sunnybrook offers professional interpretation services to our patients. Learn more about this service at [sunnybrook.ca/interpreters](https://www.sunnybrook.ca/interpreters).

# Timeline for Patients Having TAVI





**Diagnostic Test:  
CT Gated Aorta**

**Date:**

**Time:**

**Location:**

A-Wing, Ground Floor,  
Room AG 256

**Diagnostic Test:  
Coronary Angiogram**

**Date:**

**Time:**

**Location:**

Outpatient Cath Lab,  
B-Wing, 3rd Floor,  
Room B3 12

**Second TAVI Clinic  
Appointment**

The Structural Heart  
Clinic will call you for an  
appointment to discuss  
your tests.

**Date:**

**Time:**

**Location:**

Structural Heart Clinic  
A-Wing, 2nd Floor,  
Room A2 08

# Timeline for Patients Having TAVI

3 to 4 weeks before  
your TAVI

7



The **TAVI Clinic** will  
phone to tell you the  
date of your TAVI  
procedure.



2 to 3 weeks before  
your TAVI

8

## Pre-Anesthesia Assessment

Date:

Time:

**Location:**

Pre-anesthesia Clinic  
M-Wing, Ground Floor,  
Room MG 402

The day of  
your TAVI

9

## TAVI Procedure

Date:

Time:

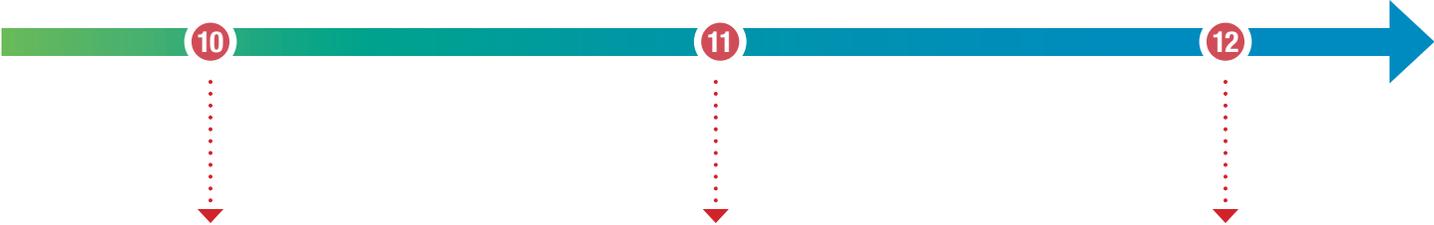
**Location:**

Outpatient Cath Lab  
B-Wing, 3rd Floor,  
Room B3 12

1 to 2 days after  
your TAVI

4 to 6 weeks after  
discharge

1 year after  
discharge



**Discharge Date**

**Date:**

**Time:**

**TAVI Follow-Up  
Appointment**

**Date:**

**Time:**

**Location:**

Structural Heart Clinic  
A-Wing, 2nd Floor,  
Room A2 08

**One-Year  
Follow-up**

**Date:**

**Time:**

**Location:**

Structural Heart Clinic  
A-Wing, 2nd Floor,  
Room A2 08



# Introduction

## How to Use this Guide

The information in this guide will help you understand your transcatheter aortic valve implantation (TAVI) and your recovery. It also has information about what will happen on the day of your procedure and your care afterwards, including when you go home. Please note that not every journey is the same. Members of your health-care team will go over this guide with you.

We know this may be a stressful time for you and you will be given a lot of information about your medical condition. This booklet will help you keep track of what you need to do before and after your procedure. If you have any questions about the material in this booklet, please call the TAVI Clinic and speak to the secretary or nurse practitioner at 416-480-5254.

On pages 2 to 5, there is a place to write the dates and times of your appointments. At the back of the booklet and throughout, there are pages for you to write notes of your own.

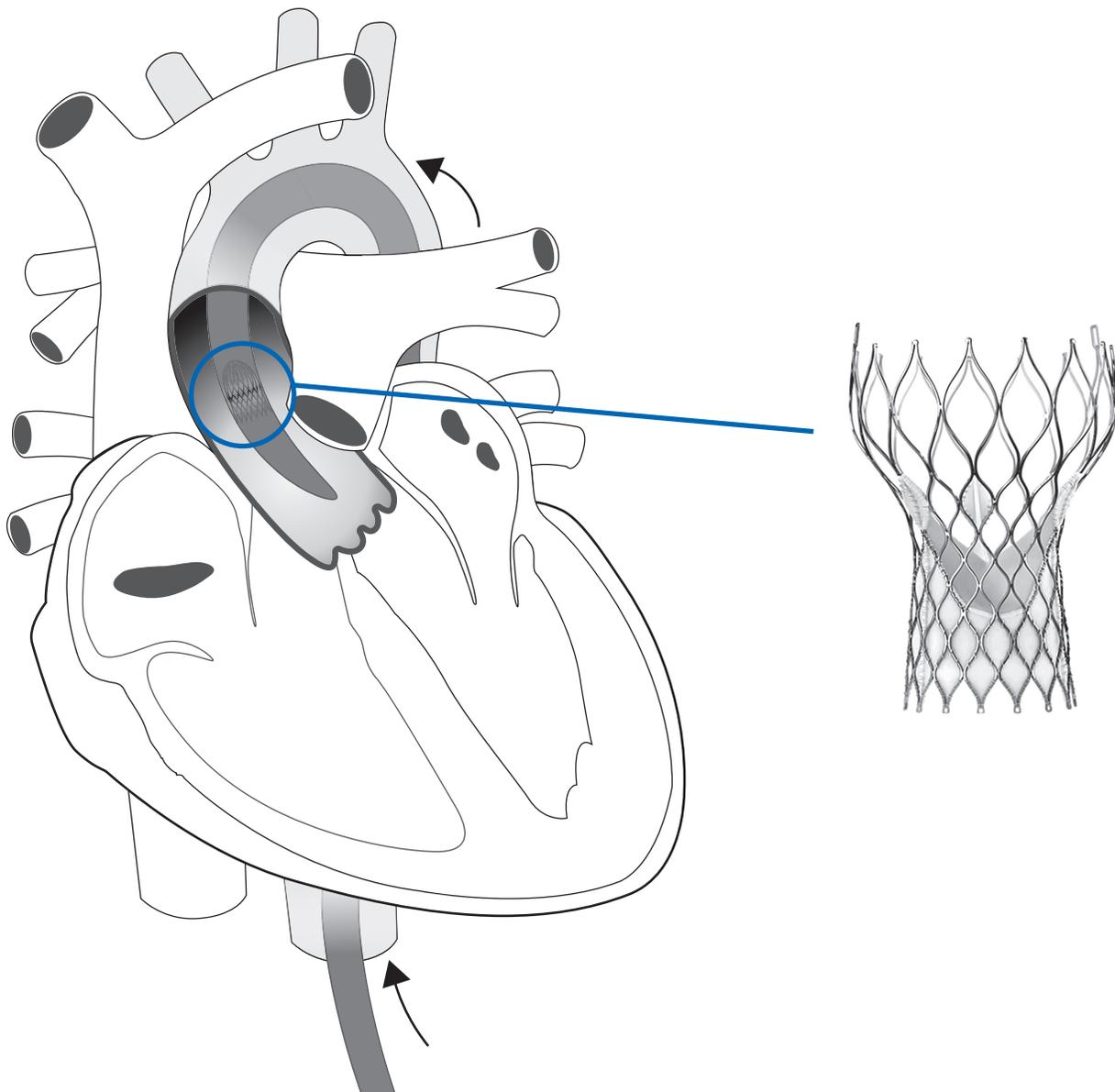
## Aortic stenosis

There are four valves in your heart. Heart valves act like one-way doors: they let blood flow in and out of different sections of your heart. The fourth valve, called the aortic valve, takes blood from the left side of your heart and sends it out to your body. When this valve becomes stiff, thick or scarred, less blood can be pushed out. Blood can be pushed backwards into your lungs when the valve opening becomes too small and thick. The heart then has to work harder to get blood to the body with every heartbeat. This leads to serious symptoms and health issues such as difficulty breathing, fainting, swelling in your feet, fatigue and sometimes chest pain. Changes in blood pressure, congestive heart failure and left ventricular dysfunction are the most common results. When aortic stenosis is severe, you need a new valve.

## What is Transcatheter Aortic Valve Implantation (TAVI)?

When repair is not possible, the valve is replaced with an artificial valve. Most valves are made of animal material (tissue valves).

TAVI is a procedure that gives you a new valve without open heart surgery. Using a catheter, a new valve is pushed into an artery starting in your groin. It moves through your chest into your heart and old aortic valve. When it's in the right place, the valve is opened and your old aortic valve is pushed to the side. The TAVI valve works immediately.



# Before TAVI

Please let us know if you **DO NOT** have any of the following:

- **Family doctor**
- **Cardiologist**
- **Recovery Support Person:** the person who will help you when you get home. We recommend someone is available to help you for the first week (day and night) you are at home.
- **Driver:** the person will pick you up from the hospital at 11:00 a.m. on the day you are discharged. You will also need transportation to and from any appointments.
- **Power of Attorney for Personal Care:** the person you have appointed with the legal authority to make medical decisions on your behalf if you are unable. If you do not have a Power of Attorney for Personal Care, a substitute decision maker will be appointed for you in accordance with the law.



To figure out if TAVI is the best option for you, there are two tests that are needed. Without these tests, we cannot perform an aortic valve replacement:

- The **coronary angiogram** is to look at the condition of the arteries that give your heart blood to make sure your heart muscle is healthy enough to undergo a valve replacement. It also shows the location of your arteries and if a valve can safely be placed.
- The **CT scan** shows us the size of your arteries in your groin and through your chest as well as the size and shape of your valve.

## Coronary Angiogram

Before your procedure, nurses will assess you and an intravenous (IV) will be started in your hand. When your cardiologist is ready, you will be brought to the Catheterization Lab (Cath Lab). The procedure can take anywhere from 30 minutes to several hours depending on what your heart needs.

### What will happen during my procedure?

- The puncture site – either in your groin or your wrist – will be cleaned and injected with a local anesthetic so you don't feel any pain during the procedure.
- A small incision (cut) is made through your groin or wrist to give the cardiologist access to your artery.
- The cardiologist will feed a small tube (catheter) into your artery and up to your heart.
- X-ray dye will be injected into the catheter to help create pictures of the blood vessels and assess your blood flow.
- If blockages are found, you may have an angioplasty to fix the blockages.
- The tube is removed and pressure is applied to the puncture site.
- Your cardiologist may recommend medication changes or another procedure depending on the findings.

During the procedure, your family can wait in the waiting area on the third-floor of the A-Wing, Room A3 37.

### What will happen after my angiogram is done?

After the procedure is done, you will return to your room. You will be connected to a heart monitor and a nurse will check your blood pressure and puncture site often. You will also undergo blood tests and an electrocardiogram (ECG or EKG) which measures the electrical activity of the heart.

You will need to sit or lie still for 4 to 6 hours after the procedure. In some cases, a clamp or sandbag will be applied to the puncture site for the first couple of hours to help with healing. You may experience some bruising or tenderness around the insertion site. This is normal and will get better in time.

## CT Gated Aorta (CT Scan)

A CT scan is x-rays taken from different angles at the same time. A computer creates cross-sectional images – like slices in a loaf of bread – of your anatomy.

### Why do I need a CT scan?

CT is essential to decide if TAVI is possible. The radiologist will measure your arteries from your groin through to your aortic valve, and all of your heart anatomy near the valve. The CT scan shows how severe your aortic valve thickness is along with any areas around the valve that might be affected by the placement of a new valve. Your heart valve is measured to help decide what size of valve will fit best. This information is vital for the interventional cardiologist(s) to decide if your body can allow the aortic valve to travel up to your heart and replace your old valve safely.

### How do I prepare for the CT scan?

- You cannot eat solid food 3 hours before the CT scan. You should continue to drink clear fluids.
- Most of your medications can be taken as usual. The TAVI team will inform you of any medications to not take before the scan.
- Arrive 15 minutes early. Go to A-Wing, Ground Floor, Room AG 256. Sign in at the CT scan registration desk and complete paperwork.

### What will happen during the CT?

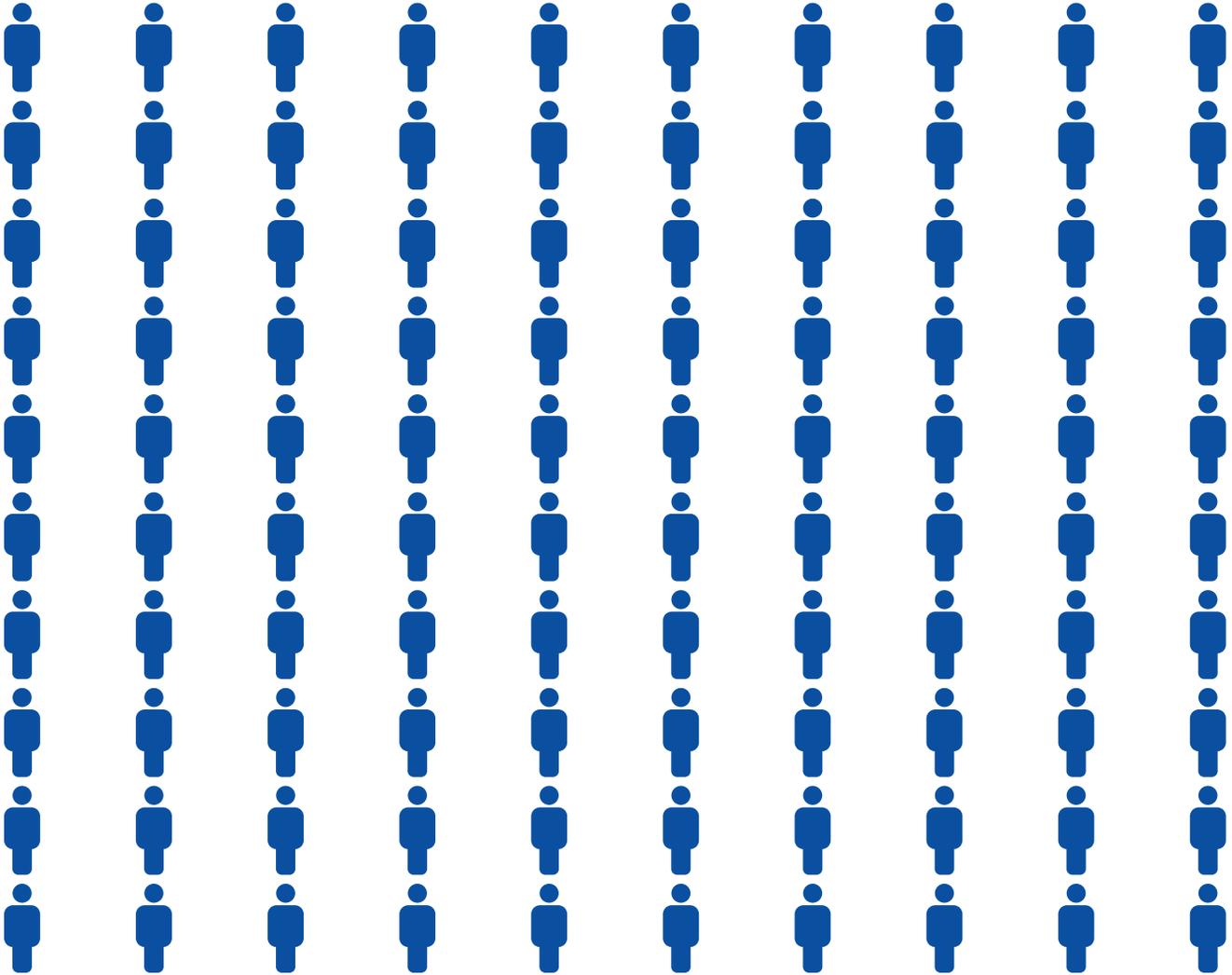
- You will need to change into a hospital gown. Do not wear jewelry.
- You will lie down on a table that will move you in and out of the CT scanner; a large donut-sized machine in the middle of the room.
- An IV will be inserted for dye (contrast) to be given during the CT scan so your arteries can clearly be seen for measuring. When the contrast is injected, your veins will feel warm and you may have a sensation of needing to urinate. These feelings will pass quickly.
- The CT scan, including preparation, could take over 2 hours.

### What will happen after the CT?

- Once the scan is done, you will wait in a room to be monitored for any reactions to contrast (the dye) for 10 minutes or more.
- When you get home, drink 1 to 2 cups of clear fluids to dilute the dye and help your kidneys void the dye sooner out of your body.
- The CT report takes 1 to 2 weeks to be completed and it is then sent to the TAVI team for review.

# Risks and Benefits

The TAVI team will discuss the risks and benefits at your appointment.



## Notes

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## Waiting for TAVI

Once you have signed consent for TAVI, you are placed on a wait list. The TAVI team will inform you in your clinic visit the estimated wait time.

While you wait, there are things you can do to help keep your heart health stable, such as:

- Eat foods low in salt and don't add salt to your food. Maximum total salt intake in one day should be 2 grams.
- Drink less than 2 litres (8 cups) of liquid per day. If you have kidney issues, follow your nephrology team's advice on how much liquid you can drink per day. Liquid includes soup, Jell-O, coffee, tea, water, juice, shakes and smoothies.
- Walk every day, slowly and rest often. If you have difficulty breathing or feel tired, stop and rest.
- Do not lifting objects more than 5 kilograms (10 pounds). This includes holding children, carrying groceries or a basket of laundry.
- Do not shovel snow, use a snow blower or cut grass. These activities will increase your heart rate.
- Take all your medications as prescribed. If you feel your medications need to be changed, please see your family doctor, cardiologist or other specialist before stopping or adjusting medications.

If you start to have swelling in your legs, please see your family doctor or cardiologist. They can adjust your medications and manage your condition.

If you have difficulty breathing or chest pain while moving that does not get better after resting for more than 10 minutes, please quickly seek urgent medical attention. Tell the paramedics and emergency department doctor that you have severe aortic stenosis and waiting for TAVI at Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre.

If you are admitted to any hospital because of breathing issues, please call the TAVI clinic at 416-480-5254 and leave a message. This information will guide scheduling TAVI.

There is a chance that after you are scheduled for TAVI, the date may be changed due to another patient who is critically ill needing valve replacement as soon as possible. This decision is carefully made with many considerations. Your patience and understanding are appreciated.

## Pre-Anesthesia Assessment

At your pre-anesthesia appointment, the team will make sure you are fit and safe for TAVI. The Pre-Anesthesia Clinic will phone to tell you the date and time of the appointment. You can record this appointment date on page 4 of this booklet.

During the assessment, a nurse will ask you about your medical history, the medications you take and will talk to you about any special needs you might have after your procedure. You may also meet with a pharmacist and the doctor (anesthetist/anesthesiologist), the person who will make you sleepy/relax (give you sedation) when you have TAVI. The doctor will review your medical history and make a safe plan for sedation during TAVI.

### What do I need to do for my assessment?

- Please check-in at M-Wing, on the Ground Floor, Room MG 402.
- The visit will take place in the Pre-anesthesia Clinic and last from 2 to 4 hours.
- Please eat and take your medications as usual before you come to this appointment.

### Please bring the following items to your assessment:

- This booklet.
- Your Ontario Health Card.
- The name and telephone numbers of your family doctor and any specialists who treat your medical conditions.
- All of your medications in the containers they came in. These include pills, inhalers or puffers, injections, and eye drops. Also bring any herbal medicines or vitamins you take.
- Only 1 family member or friend to the appointment.



## Preparing Your Body for TAVI

Maintaining a healthy lifestyle can help prepare your body for TAVI and help with your recovery after this procedure. Eat heart-healthy meals, follow a no-salt added diet and continue an easy, light exercise routine as advised by your TAVI team and cardiologist. Stop exercises that bring on signs of your heart problems.

6 days before  
TAVI

1



If you take anticoagulants or antiplatelet medications (also known as blood thinners), your TAVI doctor, nurse practitioner or the pre-admission clinic nurse or pharmacist will tell you when to stop these medications.

1 day before  
TAVI

2



Use the special antibacterial soap prescribed to you and wash from the neck down.



If you think you may have trouble sleeping, speak with your family doctor about taking a sleeping pill. Feeling anxious or afraid is normal. Sometimes talking to someone helps to decrease your worry.



**DO NOT** eat solid food or milk/ milk products after midnight.

### Stop Smoking:

Smoking can affect your healing. Try to stop or smoke less before TAVI. Speak to your doctor or nurse practitioner if you would like to quit smoking or you need help with withdrawal symptoms. You may also visit [smokershelpline.ca](http://smokershelpline.ca) or call 1-877-513-5333.



### Morning of TAVI



**DO NOT** drink for 2 hours before TAVI. You may rinse your mouth with water or brush your teeth, but do not swallow. You may take a small sip of water if you are directed to take medication before TAVI.



Remove all make-up, nail polish, jewelry and body piercings.



Use the special antibacterial soap prescribed to you and wash from your neck down. **DO NOT** use perfume, cologne, scented cream, body lotion, deodorant or hair products. Sunnybrook is a fragrance-free hospital.

### Notes

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# The Day of TAVI

## Before Going to the Hospital

- Do not eat anything before your procedure. You may drink clear fluids only.
- Remove all make-up, nail polish, jewelry and body piercings.
- Do not use perfume, cologne, scented cream, body lotion, deodorant or hair products. Sunnybrook is a fragrance-free hospital.
- Do not smoke any tobacco products or recreational drugs.
- Do not take any prescription, over-the-counter or herbal medications unless directed by your pharmacist or doctor.

### What to bring to the hospital:

- This booklet.
- Your Ontario Health Card.
- Glasses, dentures, hearing aids and any walking aids you may need.
- Sleep apnea machine (CPAP or BIPAP), if you have one.
- Non-slip footwear.
- Your prescription and over-the-counter medications in the containers they came in. These include pills, inhalers or puffers, injections, eye drops, herbal medicines and vitamins.
- A copy of your legal documents for advanced directives and power of attorney for personal care, if you have them.



### Please DO NOT bring:

- × Money
- × Jewelry
- × Electronic devices, such as tablets, computers, etc.

**The hospital will not take responsibility for any lost or stolen items.**

## Registration

When you get to the hospital, check-in at the Outpatient Cath Lab area in the B-Wing, 3rd Floor, Room B3 12.

After you check-in, you will be asked to put on a hospital gown and all of your personal clothing will be given to your family. A nurse will then bring you to a room to prepare you for TAVI. The nurse will sanitize your skin, clip any body hair, and carry out any orders from the interventional cardiologist.

### Note:



Sometimes procedures are cancelled because there is someone else who is in a medical emergency situation. If your procedure is cancelled, you will be contacted by the TAVI secretary and a new TAVI date will be booked as soon as possible.

## In the Catheterization Lab

Before your procedure, nurses will assess you and an intravenous (IV) will be started in your hand. When your cardiologist is ready, you will be brought to the catheterization lab (cath lab).

You will participate in a safety checklist with your cardiologist and the health-care team before your procedure begins.

The procedure usually takes about 1 to 2 hours.

### What will happen during my procedure?

- The puncture site at your groin will be cleaned and injected with a local anesthetic so you don't feel any pain during the procedure.
- A small incision (cut) is made through your groin to give the cardiologist access to your artery.
- The cardiologist will feed a small tube (catheter) into your artery and up to your heart.
- The replacement valve is passed through the catheter, up to the heart and into your existing valve.

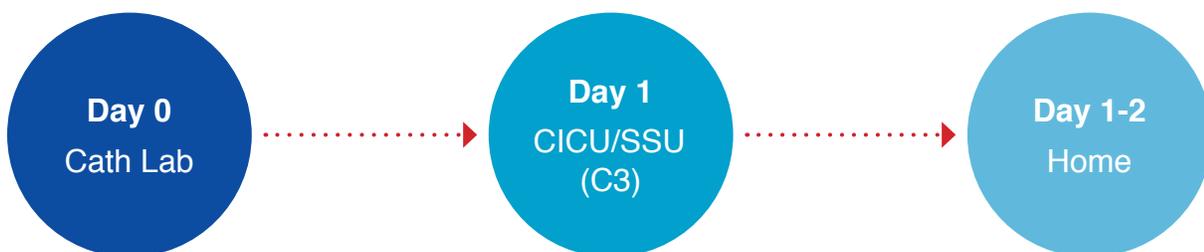
- Once in the proper position, the valve is expanded, and your old aortic valve is pushed to the side.
- The tube is removed and pressure is applied to the puncture site.

## What will happen after my procedure is done?

After your procedure is done, you will go to the Cardiac Intensive Care Unit (CICU) on the third floor of the C-Wing (C3) or Short Stay Unit (SSU), B-Wing, third floor. You will be hooked up to a heart monitor and a nurse will check your blood pressure and puncture site frequently.

You will need to lie still for 4 to 6 hours after the procedure. In some cases, a clamp or sandbag will be applied to the puncture site for the first couple of hours to help with healing. You may experience some bruising or tenderness around the insertion site. This is normal and will get better in time.

Patients are typically discharged the next day.



### Care Closer to Home

If you have been transferred to Sunnybrook for specialized care that you could not have received locally, you will be transferred back to the hospital closer to home or to St. John's Rehab when your specialized care is complete.

For more information, visit [sunnybrook.ca/repatriation](https://www.sunnybrook.ca/repatriation).



# After TAVI Care

## How will I feel after my procedure?

After the procedure is done, you will be in the Cardiac Intensive Care Unit (CICU).

- You may feel tired from the medications you were given.
- You may have some bruising and tenderness in the area of the procedure.
- Medications may cause temporary delirium or confusion.



## Getting Moving

While you are in the hospital, you should increase your activity gradually. At the beginning, you may be on bed rest. As soon as you are able, you will start with easy activities such as sitting in a chair and walking in your room. Early activity is important because you lose muscle strength very quickly when you stay in bed.

Each person is different, so you need to listen to your body and progress at your own pace. If you feel tired during an activity, stop and rest.

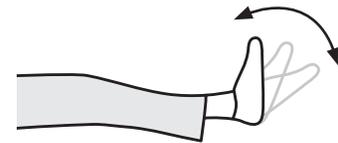
## Don't Fall, Call:

Please call for assistance when you need help getting up. Use non-slip footwear and any aids such as glasses, hearing aids and a walker to help prevent you from falling.

## Ankle Pumps

Pumping your ankles can help circulation. Pull your toes toward you and then push down like on a gas pedal. Repeat 10 times for every hour you are awake.

Repetitions	Frequency
10	Hourly



## Walking

As soon as you are able, you will be encouraged to start walking in your room, and then short walks in the hallway. Depending on your condition, walks should last up to 5 minutes at a comfortable pace, and should be completed 3 times each day.

Repetitions	Frequency
3	Daily

## Swelling

**It is common for your legs to swell after a heart procedure. Here are ways you can help decrease swelling and improve circulation:**

- Do ankle pumping, lower leg exercises, and walk frequently. Avoid standing or sitting for long periods of time.
- When resting in bed, use pillows to raise your legs higher than your heart.
- You may be instructed to wear tensor bandages.
- **DO NOT** cross your legs – this limits blood flow.

Swelling should decrease within a few days or weeks. If you notice persistent swelling in both ankles, let your doctor know.



## Emotional Changes

It is common to become sad, depressed or more emotional after any major health incident. It is often related to medications, loss of sleep, and stress. Your loved ones may also experience several emotions, including helplessness, fear and over protectiveness. These feelings may come and go over a period of time and usually pass in 6 to 12 weeks. If these feelings continue for several months, please speak with your family doctor.

## Delirium

After TAVI, it is possible for you to experience temporary changes to your thinking and behavior. You may become disoriented, forgetful or have difficulty thinking clearly. Your health-care team will ask you questions to assess your level of delirium and determine the best ways to help prevent or manage your condition.

## Discomfort or Pain

Each patient experiences pain and discomfort in a different way. After a TAVI, you may feel discomfort around the puncture site for a few days.

If the medication is not providing relief, or you are having angina or other chest pain, speak with a member of your health-care team.

## Constipation

Constipation is common as a result of your pain medication, reduced activity levels or iron supplements. While in hospital, you will be given a stool softener to avoid straining your body. Make sure you eat foods that are high in fibre (fruit, vegetables, whole grain breads and cereals), and drinking enough fluids each day. Do not strain. If constipation is a problem, talk to a pharmacist or your doctor.

### Infection Control:



Please clean your hands each time you enter and leave your room and unit using the hand sanitizer stations throughout the hospital.

Friends and family should not visit you if they are sick.



## Sleeping

It is important to your recovery to rest and sleep. After a procedure, it is common to have temporary changes of sleep habits. You may have difficulty sleeping because of pain or anxiety. Consult your doctor if you have trouble sleeping.

## Medication

Changes may be made to your medications after your hospital stay. New medications may be added for long-term heart protection, and you may be prescribed some temporary medications to help with pain. Some of your previous medication such as blood pressure medications, diabetes medications, diuretics (water pills) or blood thinners may be adjusted or discontinued.

A new prescription will be given to you on the day that you are discharged – this prescription will be a complete list of all the medications you are to take when you go home. A member of your health-care team will review your medications with you before you go home. Your family doctor or cardiologist will review these medications on your follow-up appointments and provide refills as needed.

Fill your discharge prescription on the day you go home to avoid missing any medications. You may fill your prescription at your local community pharmacy.

If you have any questions about your medications, contact your doctor, nurse practitioner or pharmacist.

### Antibiotics before dental appointments and invasive procedures



Now that you have a new aortic heart valve, for the rest of your life, you need to take antibiotics one hour before a dental appointment for teeth cleaning or procedures. You also need antibiotics one hour before invasive medical procedures such as colonoscopy, cystoscopy, and endoscopy. Your dentist, family doctor or specialist doing the procedure will give you a prescription.



## Preparing to Go Home

Your health-care team has evaluated your progress since your procedure and has decided that you are ready to leave the hospital. By the time you are discharged you should be able to take frequent walks around the inpatient unit on your own. The recovery period varies from person to person. Do everything in moderation.

### Your Discharge Checklist

- Arrange to be picked up on the day of discharge.
- Speak to your physiotherapist or member of your health-care team about follow-up exercises
- Review the discharge paperwork with your nurse, including follow-up appointments and letters for your family doctor.
- Review your discharge prescriptions with your doctor, nurse or pharmacist.
- Arrange for someone to be home with you or nearby for the first week to help you, if you haven't done so already. Remember you will not be able to lift more than 2.3 kilograms (5 pounds).
- Bring this booklet home with you. It contains information about your home recovery program.



**You will have a follow-up appointment in the TAVI Clinic 4 to 6 weeks after your procedure. Record the date of your appointment on page 5.**

# My Progress Tracker

Your health-care team will help you get moving throughout your stay in hospital. You can use this table to track your progress. Recovery is different for each person.

Day 0 (Day of TAVI)	
You will be in Coronary Intensive Care Unit (CICU) or Short Stay Unit (SSU). A nurse will be with you at all times. You need to remain in bed for at least 4 hours. Your nurse will then help you with the activities below over the next 8 hours.	
Sit at the edge of your bed and hang your feet at your bedside.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Day 1	
Your health-care team will help you with the activities. You should be wearing closed-toe, rubber-sole slippers to keep you safe when walking. You may be able to go home today.	
Sit at the edge of your bed and walk to your chair for all three meals.	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Ankle pumps.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Walk for 3- to- 5 minutes alone or with help, as directed.	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Get dressed if going home.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Day 2	
You will be going home today. Your driver should arrive by 11:00 a.m. If your driver is late, you will be moved to the patient lounge.	
Walk for 3- to- 5 minutes alone or with help, as directed.	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Sit up in your chair for meals.	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Get dressed to go home as directed.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Continue with your walking and ankle pumps until you are discharged.	



# Taking Care of Your Incisions

The appearance of your incision will improve over time. During the first weeks after the procedure you may have a small lump, bruise or tenderness around the puncture site. These are common and will gradually disappear.

If you experience discomfort you may take acetaminophen (Tylenol) or another medication ordered by your doctor.



## Keep the dressing on your puncture site for 24 hours.

After 24 hours you can take a shower. Do not soak in a bathtub for at least 7 days after your procedure. This is to prevent your puncture site from bleeding, prevent infection and to help with healing. You can leave the bandage off to help it heal.

## What should I do if my puncture site bleeds?

If your puncture site begins to bleed, you must apply pressure. Lie down on a firm surface and press firmly on the bleeding with 2 or 3 fingers for 15 minutes or more. If it continues to bleed, call 911 or have someone drive you to the closest Emergency Department.





# Getting Back to Daily Activities

## When should I get medical help if I run into problems?

**Contact your family doctor immediately or go to the nearest emergency department if you notice any of these symptoms:**

- Extreme tenderness, redness or yellow/green drainage from any of your incisions (cuts).
- Angina or chest pain, pressure or heaviness like you may have had before.
- Pain in the chest/neck/shoulder that is worse when taking a deep breath.
- Fever of 39 degrees Celsius (100 degrees Fahrenheit) or higher for more than 24 hours.
- Shortness of breath that goes on for more than a few minutes after an activity has stopped or while you are at rest.
- Weight gain of 1.4 kg (3 lbs) for 2 days in a row.
- Fatigue or tiredness that is much worse than you had before TAVI and doesn't improve in 2 to 3 days.



## Your Recovery Moving Forward

During the recovery period, your body sees any activity as work. It is normal to feel more tired than usual. The goal is progressive activity – doing a little more each day. You may feel like you are able to do more. It is best to follow the recommended guidelines and do everything in moderation.

During the next 4 weeks, it is important to listen to your body. It will let you know when it needs rest, just as it will let you know when you feel energetic and able to begin or continue an activity.

This activities section of the guide is designed to instruct you on an exercise program to perform in the first 4 weeks at home after TAVI. We encourage you to take control of your recovery by recording your activity and progress using the activity tracker on pages 39 to 42.

Following the suggestions in this guide will help to smooth your way for an easy, safe, and comfortable recovery.

### Know the Warning Signs:

**If you feel any of these symptoms while you are exercising, stop and rest. Wait for the symptoms to pass. If symptoms last longer than 10 minutes, go to the nearest Emergency Department.**

- Chest pain
- Shortness of breath
- Dizziness or lightheadedness
- Excessive fatigue
- Excessive sweating
- Palpitations or a racing heartbeat

## Cardiac Rehabilitation Program

There are a number of outpatient cardiac rehabilitation programs across the province that are designed for people who are recovering from heart attacks, heart surgery/procedures or who are living with various heart and circulation conditions.

We recommend you participate in an outpatient cardiac rehabilitation program close to home. The cardiologist/nurse practitioner will discuss rehab with you at your TAVI follow-up appointment, 4 to 6 weeks after your procedure. These programs are designed to improve your strength and the health of your heart. Until then, please follow the at-home exercise program below.

## Your At-Home Exercise Program

This walking program will improve the fitness of your heart, lungs and muscles. All muscles must be built up slowly, and the heart is no exception. This walking program will gradually reintroduce your heart to exercise, starting with very short walking periods. This slow progression provides a safe beginning for improving your cardiovascular fitness. When you complete a level with ease, move to the next level.

Level 1	Goal to walk 5 minutes	5-6 times, daily
Level 2	Goal to walk 10 minutes	3 times, daily
Level 3	Goal to walk 15 minutes	2 times, daily
Level 4	Goal to walk 30 minutes	1 time, daily

### Instructions

- Begin walking using the guidelines in the activity tracker on page 39. Aim to improve approximately one level per week. If the suggested progression is too tiring, or if you miss one day, stay on the same level for another one or two days. If you feel tired or unwell, or have not exercised for two or more days, drop a level when you begin again.
- Walk at a comfortable pace on a level surface. Do not include any stairs in your walking program.
- When you can walk for 10 minutes, you may walk outdoors. Exercise indoors if it is extremely cold or hot or if there is high humidity or poor air quality. Some good options are a local shopping centre, apartment hallway, or recreation centre.
- Be sure to plan your walks and communicate your route with your support person. Do not walk in secluded areas. Walk in areas that are emergency vehicle accessible and bring a cell phone with you.

## How to Prevent Falls at Home

As our age increases, so does our risk of falling. Follow the tips below to help reduce your risk of falling.

- **Pace yourself.** Walk with intention and be mindful of your movements.
- **Mind your feet.** Wear indoor shoes or slippers that have closed heels, closed toes, and a non-slip rubberized sole. Make sure your shoes fit well so they aren't going to fall off your feet and become a tripping hazard.
- **Clear the clutter.** Keep high traffic areas free from obstacles by removing or securing loose electrical cords, unnecessary small furniture and general clutter. Get rid of any loose rugs or scatter mats, which are common tripping hazards.
- **Hold on.** Use walking aids like a cane or walker, or install grab-bars if you need additional support. Unlike the furniture and walls, walking aids will help you get the grip you need to support your body.
- **Practice safe hygiene.** Prevent slipping and sliding by wiping up spills immediately and using a non-slip bathmat on the floor inside and outside your bathtub. Install grab-bars in your bathtub or beside your toilet for additional support. If balance and fatigue is an issue, you may want to consider using a bath chair and handheld shower head that will let you sit while you're bathing.
- **Take one step at a time.** Hold on to the railing when climbing the stairs even if you think you can do without. Try installing a second handrail for additional support, or use a cane in one hand and the handrail with the other to climb the stairs. Increase the visibility of your stairs by putting coloured tape on the edge of each step to clearly differentiate one from the other.

- **Look around.** Make sure your rooms, hallways and stairways have adequate lighting so you can see the objects and walking path around you. Use a nightlight to help guide you in the middle of the night. Even with the right lighting, it's tough to safely navigate around your home if your eyesight is poor. Make sure your eyes get tested regularly and use corrective eyewear if you need them.
- **Conserve your energy.** Eating nutritious meals will help you keep your strength and balance throughout the day. Conserve your energy by taking frequent rest breaks, sitting to complete activities, and placing commonly used items within easy reach to avoid bending and overhead lifting. Most importantly, get a good night's sleep.

For more information about falls prevention or to participate in a falls prevent program, speak to your physician about programs that may be available to you. Programs may include consultations by a licensed physical or occupational therapist, exercise classes and home assessments.

## Activity Guidelines



### Lifting and Straining

For 4 weeks, do not lift items greater than 2.3 kilograms (5 pounds) per arm, or 4.6 kg (10 lbs) total, for example: laundry baskets, groceries, telephone books, luggage, pets, children or infants. Do not push or pull heavy objects such as doors, furniture or appliances, or try to open stuck windows or jar lids.



### Driving

The Ontario Ministry of Transportation does not allow a person to drive after a heart attack or heart procedure for a minimum of 4 weeks. Fitness to drive depends on many factors, such as the amount of heart damage, whether or not you have had treatment, and other conditions. Your cardiologist or nurse practitioner will determine when you can drive safely again.

Your insurance may change as a result of your heart surgery. Contact your insurance provider to be sure you are covered.



### Housework or Yardwork

Do not do strenuous house or yard work such as sweeping, mopping, or scrubbing for the first 6 weeks. Avoid snow shoveling and consider investing in a snow blower or snow removal service.



### Bathing or Showering

Avoid extreme temperatures in the bath or shower. Lukewarm water is best and use mild unscented soap. Avoid baths until your incision is healed. Check with your cardiologist before using a hot tub or sauna.



### Climbing Stairs

Stairs are safe to use, but not as exercise. Limit stair use to once or twice a day for the first 1 to 2 weeks. Take one step at a time, pausing every 3 to 4 steps to take deep breaths. Hold onto the handrail.



### Travelling

Check with your TAVI team and travel insurance provider when considering travel plans. If travelling in a car for longer durations, take rests each hour and get out of the car to do a short walk.



### Sexual Activity

It is safe to return to sexual activity when you are able to climb two flights of stairs continuously without becoming short of breath. Upon returning to sexual activity, listen to your body, take your time, and stop and rest if you feel pain or pressure in your chest.



### Returning to Work

Returning to work depends on the demands of your job and on your recovery. Discuss your return to work with your cardiologist.

## Quick Reference Guide to Common Activities

Some common activities you may wish to do after your TAVI and the time periods you must wait before doing them are listed below. These recommended waiting periods are minimum guidelines only. You may wish to wait longer. Only begin an activity when you feel strong enough.

We encourage you to write down the activities that are important to you and ask your cardiologist or nurse practitioner for advice of when you can start them again.

Household & Self Care Activities	Recreational Activities	
<b>As soon as you feel able</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Light housekeeping</li> <li>• Preparing simple meals</li> <li>• Setting or clearing the table</li> <li>• Sexual activity</li> <li>• Climbing stairs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Golfing (putting only)</li> <li>• Handicrafts</li> <li>• Playing cards</li> <li>• Riding in the car as a passenger</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stationary bike (no resistance)</li> <li>• Visiting friends or having visitors</li> <li>• Walking</li> </ul>
<b>Wait at least 6 weeks and/or until your TAVI clinic appointment</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cleaning windows</li> <li>• Light gardening</li> <li>• Mopping, polishing or scrubbing</li> <li>• Mowing lawn (riding mowers only)</li> <li>• Vacuuming</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dancing (social)</li> <li>• Golfing with power cart (9 holes)</li> <li>• Horseback riding (at a walk)</li> <li>• Jogging</li> <li>• Light carpentry</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Painting</li> <li>• Racquet sports</li> <li>• Skating</li> <li>• Swimming</li> <li>• Volleyball</li> </ul>
<b>Wait at least 3 months and check with your cardiologist/nurse practitioner</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chopping wood</li> <li>• Heavy gardening</li> <li>• Heavy housekeeping</li> <li>• Pushing lawn mower or snow blower</li> <li>• Tractor riding</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bowling</li> <li>• Curling</li> <li>• Golfing (18 holes)</li> <li>• Horseback riding (at a trot)</li> <li>• Hunting</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mountain climbing</li> <li>• Riding a skidoo or motorcycle</li> <li>• Rowing</li> <li>• Skiing</li> <li>• Scuba diving</li> </ul>

## My Activity Tracker

The walking program and other activities should be spread throughout the day and separated by periods of rest.

Use the table below to track your progress. Each person will progress at different rates, and that is okay. Remember to listen to your body and know when it needs rest. Consult your health-care team if you are not progressing through the steps as you would like.

Level 1	
<b>Activity Guidelines:</b> Your level of activity should be similar to the hospital activity routine that you reached before you were discharged. Manage your fatigue by taking rests as needed. Complete your exercises indoors.	
<b>Day 1</b>	
Goal to walk <b>5 minutes, 6 times</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Day 2</b>	
Goal to walk <b>5 minutes, 6 times</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Day 3</b>	
Goal to walk <b>5 minutes, 6 times</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Day 4</b>	
Goal to walk <b>5 minutes, 6 times</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Day 5</b>	
Goal to walk <b>5 minutes, 6 times</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Day 6</b>	
Goal to walk <b>5 minutes, 6 times</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Day 7</b>	
Goal to walk <b>5 minutes, 6 times</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>

<b>Level 2</b>	
<b>Activity Guidelines:</b> You may take on more normal levels of activity such as light housework, playing cards, crafts, preparing simple meals, sexual activity. If you can walk comfortably for 10 minutes, you may walk outdoors if it is not too hot or too cold outside.	
<b>Day 1</b>	
Goal to walk <b>10 minutes, 3 times</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Day 2</b>	
Goal to walk <b>10 minutes, 3 times</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Day 3</b>	
Goal to walk <b>10 minutes, 3 times</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Day 4</b>	
Goal to walk <b>10 minutes, 3 times</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Day 5</b>	
Goal to walk <b>10 minutes, 3 times</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Day 6</b>	
Goal to walk <b>10 minutes, 3 times</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Day 7</b>	
Goal to walk <b>10 minutes, 3 times</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>

If you are able to tolerate Level 2, proceed to Level 3. If not, repeat Level 2.

### Level 3

**Activity Guidelines:** In addition to the light activities you started in Level 2, you can also participate more freely in social activities like going out to the movies, restaurants or brief shopping trips. Try to limit trips to less than two hours and avoid crowded areas.

#### Day 1

Goal to walk **15 minutes, 2 times**

#### Day 2

Goal to walk **15 minutes, 2 times**

#### Day 3

Goal to walk **15 minutes, 2 times**

#### Day 4

Goal to walk **15 minutes, 2 times**

#### Day 5

Goal to walk **15 minutes, 2 times**

#### Day 6

Goal to walk **15 minutes, 2 times**

#### Day 7

Goal to walk **15 minutes, 2 times**

If you are able to tolerate Level 3, proceed to Level 4. If not, repeat Level 3.

<b>Level 4</b>	
<b>Activity Guidelines:</b> Chores such as light yard work, washing the car or preparing meals may be started, but remember to avoid strenuous activity.	
<b>Day 1</b>	
Goal to walk <b>30 minutes, 1 time</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Day 2</b>	
Goal to walk <b>30 minutes, 1 time</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Day 3</b>	
Goal to walk <b>30 minutes, 1 time</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Day 4</b>	
Goal to walk <b>30 minutes, 1 time</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Day 5</b>	
Goal to walk <b>30 minutes, 1 time</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Day 6</b>	
Goal to walk <b>30 minutes, 1 time</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Day 7</b>	
Goal to walk <b>30 minutes, 1 time</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>

After you have completed the walking program, feel free to progress your walking time after consulting with your cardiac rehabilitation team. If you are participating in rehab, consult your rehab team about exercising.

# Healthy Living

By living a healthy lifestyle, you can help reduce and manage your risk factors for coronary artery disease and better maintain your heart. You can find many healthy living tips on Sunnybrook's Your Health Matters blog at [health.sunnybrook.ca](http://health.sunnybrook.ca).

## Heart-Healthy Eating

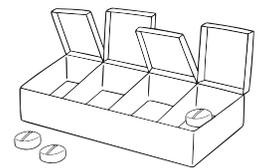
Many risk factors for heart disease – such as high blood pressure, cholesterol, obesity and diabetes – are affected by your food choices and eating habits. Read the nutrition label on food products to help you make healthy choices. Fruits, vegetables and whole grain products are high in fibre and help to lower cholesterol. You should also limit your salt and sugar intake. Speak to a dietitian if you have any specific dietary questions.

## Limit Alcohol

Alcohol may increase triglycerides, which are a type of fat in the blood that makes the blood thicker and increases the risk for a clot. If you have high triglycerides, you should avoid having alcohol on a regular basis. Ask your family doctor if you are unsure about your triglyceride levels.

## Take Your Medications

Take your medications regularly as prescribed. If you have concerns about managing your medications, speak with your community pharmacy about using a dosette (pill box) or pre-arranging your medications in weekly blister packs.



## Check Your Blood Pressure

High blood pressure puts a strain on your heart and increases the speed that plaque forms in your arteries. Check your blood pressure regularly as directed by your physician and take medications as prescribed. Minimize your sodium (salt) intake and exercise regularly.

## No Smoking

Smoking makes your heart work harder. It increases your heart rate, narrows blood vessels, raises blood pressure, and reduces the amount of blood, oxygen and nutrients that get to your heart. Second hand smoke can cause the same effects. By not smoking you will reduce your risks of coronary artery disease over time. Ask your doctor or pharmacist for ways of helping you stop or reduce smoking. You may also visit [smokershelpline.ca](http://smokershelpline.ca) or call 1-877-513-5333.

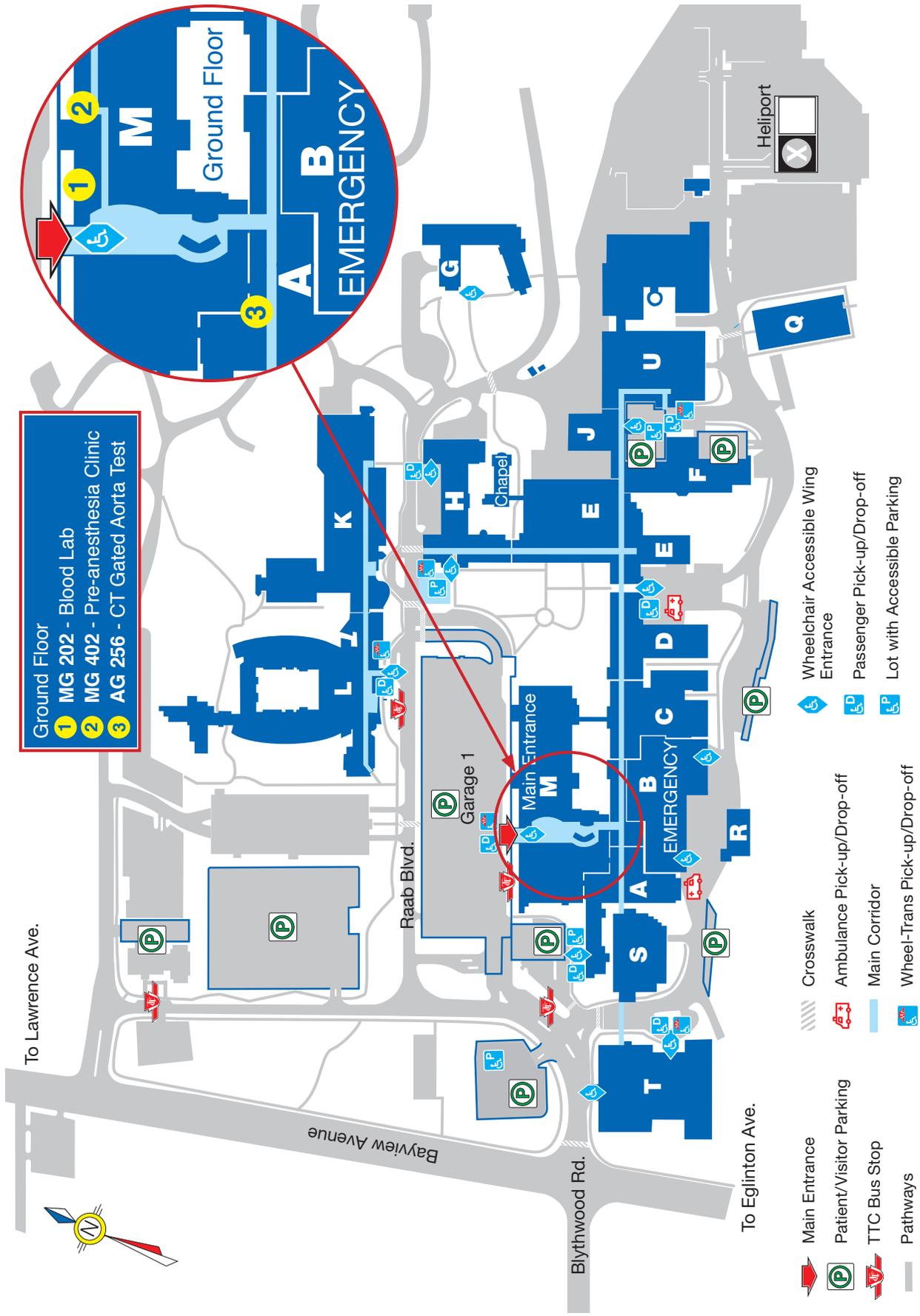
## Exercise Regularly

Physical activity can help you feel better, decrease symptoms and improve your heart's function. Be sure to talk to your doctor before starting an exercise program or increasing your activity level. The key is to be active slowly and regularly. The goal is to do 30 minutes of activity a day for five days each week. This can be split into parts, such as three ten-minute blocks of activity.



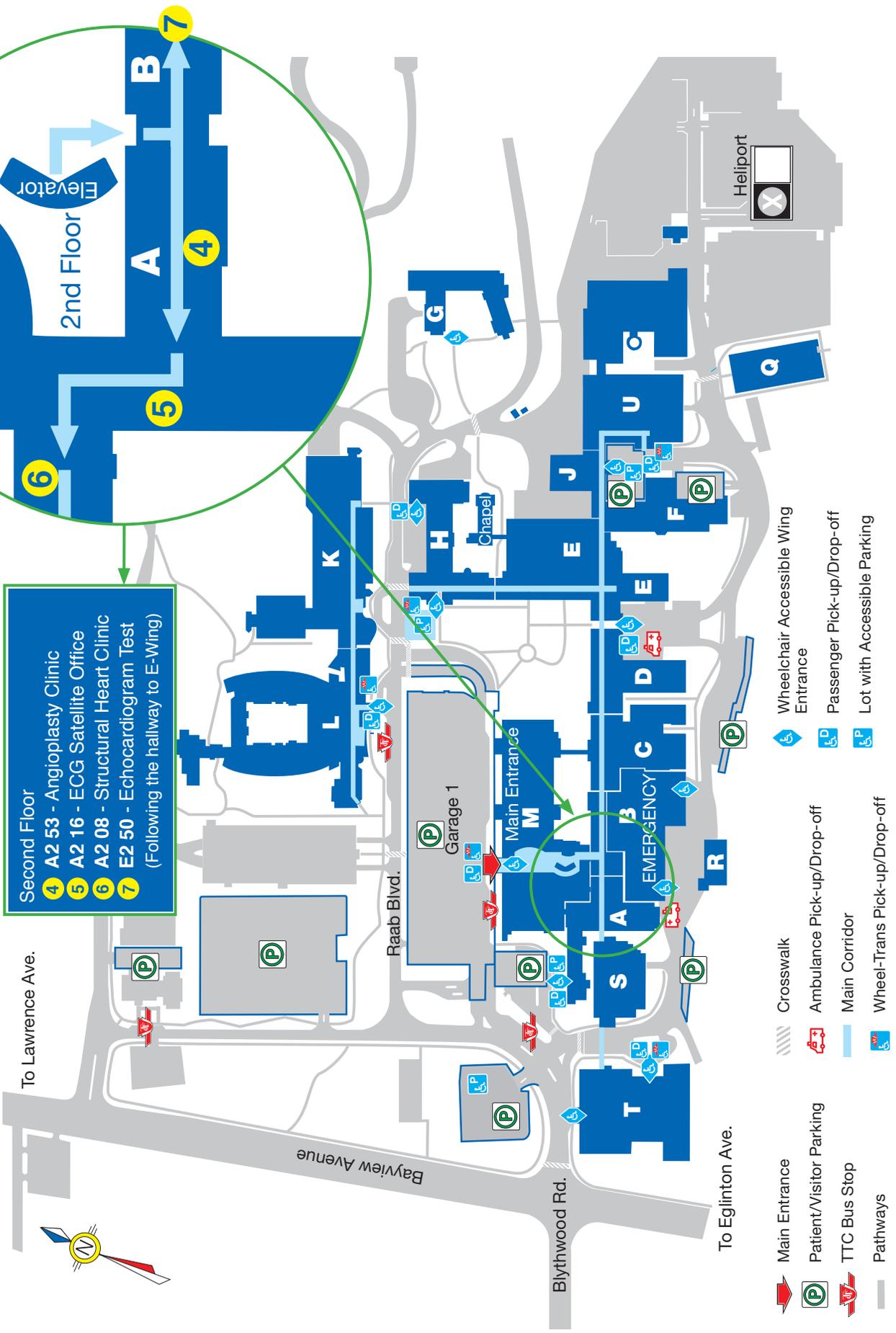
# Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre

The location of your appointments on the ground floor:  
(Take the M-Wing elevators to the ground floor)



# Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre

The location of your appointments on the second floor:  
(Take the M-Wing elevators to the second floor)



**Schulich Heart Centre**  
2075 Bayview Avenue  
Toronto, Ontario M4N 3M5

[sunnybrook.ca/heart](https://www.sunnybrook.ca/heart)