

*If you have any questions, ask your physician or nurse.*

## Aortic Dissection: Activity Guidelines

All people with aortic dissections will have some lifelong activity restrictions. This is because even after some of the aorta is repaired or replaced, the remaining aorta is at risk for further complications, including aneurysm, rupture or recurrent dissection.

The level of physical activity can vary from person to person. Your surgeon will discuss your specific restrictions with you.

### Short-term limits

It is important to avoid activities that may raise your blood pressure.

- Do not do the Valsalva maneuver (bearing down) or strain.
- Do not do sexual activity for at least 6 weeks.
- Do not do activities that are very intense for a time, such as jogging.
- Do not lift more than 20 pounds (weight of 2 gallons of milk) for at least 6 weeks.

### Long-term limits

You may be able to exercise after 6 weeks, but discuss this with your surgeon at your follow-up appointment.

Routine exercise is important for physical and emotional health. However, take a cautious approach and limit activities that require a lot of effort or exertion. The goal is to prevent further problems. Continue to avoid activities that may raise your blood pressure.

- Do not do the Valsalva maneuver (bearing down) or strain.
- Do not do heavy weightlifting. Do not lift more than 50 pounds (weight of a large suitcase).
- Do not take part in contact sports, such as football or basketball.

Mild to moderate aerobic exercise is usually OK. Unless your physician tells you otherwise, you may do aerobic activity for at least 30 minutes every day.

Sexual activity after 6 weeks is generally safe if you allow for rest periods to allow your blood pressure to return to normal. Do not overly exert yourself during sexual activity.

Please discuss any activity concerns with a member of your care team who monitors your cardiovascular health.

## Activity guidelines

### Safe activities

- Gardening
- Walking briskly
- Vacuuming
- Climbing stairs
- Dancing (leisurely)
- Swimming at a slow pace
- General housecleaning
- Bicycling (less than 10 miles per hour)
- Taking out the trash (less than 20 pounds for the first 4 weeks, then no more than 50 pounds)

### Activities to discuss with your physician (usually allowed after 6 weeks)

- Bicycling
- Light jogging
- Tennis (doubles)
- Golfing (without pulling a cart or carrying clubs)
- Light yard work such as raking leaves

### Unsafe activities to avoid

- Sprinting and running faster than 8 miles per hour
- Contact sports such as basketball or baseball
- Skiing
- Snorkeling
- Weightlifting
- Shoveling snow
- Chopping wood
- Mowing the lawn, unless using a riding or self-propelled lawnmower