

My VAD Journal



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Going Home With a VAD

Living with a ventricular assist device (VAD) is a life-changing event. You must understand the warnings and cautions for safe VAD functions, grow accustomed to the constant noise of the machine and keep the batteries charged. You may experience changes in your eating and sleep patterns, which may produce anxiety and unrest. If this occurs, please seek help. These options can be discussed with your physician or VAD coordinator.

General Daily Care

Driveline Exit-Site Care

The driveline exit-site dressing change frequency should be as ordered by your physician. Follow the sterile technique shown to you in the hospital. During dressing changes, look for the following signs of infection.

- Unusual drainage
- Odor
- Redness
- Pain

If you notice any of the above, contact your VAD coordinator.

DO NOT wrap, twist or kink your driveline.

Vital Signs Recording

Vital signs should be taken daily and recorded on your flow sheets. These include:

- Blood pressure
- Weight
- Temperature
- VAD readings (speed, flow, power, pulse index)

Equipment Care

- Check often to make sure the VAD system is working properly.
- VAD equipment should not be immersed in water. Avoid getting water and moisture in your controller.
- Do not expose the batteries to extreme heat or cold.
- Do not leave equipment in car.
- Never disconnect both power cables, as that will stop the pump.
- Rotate the batteries frequently. This helps to keep them charged and have a longer life.

- Contact your VAD coordinator immediately if you have problems with a battery.
- If you have any questions about operating, cleaning or storing your VAD equipment, contact your VAD coordinator.

Weekly Care Checklist

- Inspect the batteries. Wipe the metal contact with an alcohol swab and let it dry.
- Clean the battery charger while unplugged.

Activities

- Any activities that include being in water, such as swimming, bath tubs and whirlpools, are prohibited. VAD equipment should not be immersed in water.
- While in the hospital, your VAD coordinator will instruct you on the method and equipment needed for daily hygiene.
- Do not play contact sports while the VAD is implanted.
- Avoid jumping up and down.
- Do not lift more than 10 pounds for at least eight weeks.
- Be careful using computer equipment, which can emit static electricity.
- Do not vacuum. This also can emit static electricity.
- Do not sleep on your stomach.
- Do not bend at the waist. This could kink the cables, which also could cause the pump to stop.

Medical Care

- Please call your coordinator with any issues to ensure prompt attention.
- You may have a CT scan or X-ray.
- MRIs are not allowed.

Pain Management

- Pain medications may be given to you. These should be taken as ordered.
- If you have any change or increase in pain, call your doctor immediately.

Diet

- Follow your diet as directed by your physician.
- Maintain a diet low in vitamin K.
- Maintain fluid restrictions as prescribed.

Smoking and Tobacco Products

- Avoid smoking and/or secondhand smoke. This decreases your blood flow and will make your pump work much harder.

Alcohol

- No alcohol consumption. It could impair your ability to understand and react to system alarms.

Weather

- Avoid being active in very hot or cold temperatures. If you are in a cold climate, dress in layers.
- Avoid any items that can kink, bend or block your driveline and power cables.

Home Safety

- Once you are at home, you and your support person need to be sure that the space around you is safe.
- Do not use a backup generator to power any of your VAD equipment.
- Avoid the strong static discharge that comes from a television or computer screen and from scuffing your feet on carpets. A strong static discharge can cause the VAD to stop.

- Hurricanes/Power outages: Ok to charge batteries on generator power, but not ok to plug controller to MPU on generator power. Pt should register with the special needs shelter in his county in case he should ever need to evacuate or have an extended time (days or longer) without power.

Travel

Before you consider traveling, please contact your physician or VAD nurse coordinator. Special precautions may need to be taken for processing through security checkpoints.

Travel Checklists

When leaving home for any length of time, be sure to take along the following items.

- Backup controller
- Fully charged batteries
- If staying overnight, the wall power source with patient cable, battery charger
- Phone numbers such as Statline: 407-303-2474

For long trips, or when coming back to the hospital:

- Travel bag (fully stocked)
- Power module unit
- Batteries and charger

Returning to Work

Returning to work will not be permitted until you are cleared by your physician.

You are responsible for making sure that your surroundings continue to be safe. If you have any questions and/or concerns about your home environment, contact your VAD coordinator.

Clinic Location

2415 North Orange Avenue, Suite 700
Orlando, FL, 32804
407-303-2474

When coming to the VAD clinic, please make sure you bring the following.

- Travel bag
- Medication list
- VAD journal for review

When to call the On Call VAD Coordinator

If any of the following occurs, please call **407-303-2474** immediately.

- Productive cough
- Fever above 100.5 degrees
- Shortness of breath
- Diarrhea or vomiting for more than 24 hours
- Call for signs of bleeding and any equipment failure
- Unresolved VAD alarms

After hours and weekends, call 407-303-2474.

Contact Information

Date of Implant

Your coordinator is:

Phone Number

In an emergency, such as chest pain, do not call the coordinator's desk and leave a message. INSTEAD, PLEASE CALL 911.

