



THE VALLEY
HEART &
VASCULAR
INSTITUTE

TAVR

Frequently Asked Questions

IMPORTANT CONTACT NUMBERS:

Cardiac Surgery Office:
201-447-8418 (8:00 am to 5:00 pm)

After Office Hours:
201-447-8377 (Press 1 for assistance)

www.valleyheartandvascular.com/education



FAQs for Pre-Operative TAVR

Q: What is the aortic valve and Aortic Stenosis?

A: When the heart pumps, blood exits the heart and is pumped into a large vessel (called the aorta). The aortic valve acts as a one way gate allowing blood to exit the heart to go into the aorta and then to the rest of the body. Aortic stenosis refers to the narrowing of this valve, restricting the valves ability to open and allow normal blood flow. When this valve has narrowed to certain extent, it is referred to as aortic stenosis.

Q: What is TAVR?

A: TAVR or Transcatheter Aortic valve replacement is a procedure that allows heart teams to replace a diseased aortic heart valve without open-heart surgery. This procedure enables the placement of a balloon/expandable heart valve into the body with a tube-based delivery system (catheter). This allows the valve to be inserted through a small cut into an artery in the groin, or through the ribs or top of the sternum.

FAQs for the night before the procedure

Q: How many days will I be in the hospital?

A: 4-6 days

Q: Will I receive information on how to take care of myself when I go home?

A: Yes, you will be given detailed instructions on how to take care of yourself at home. It is helpful to have a family member/friend present the morning of your discharge.

Q: What time will my procedure be?

A: You will receive a call the evening before surgery between 4:30 and 6:30 p.m. If your procedure is on a Monday, you will receive a call Friday evening.

Q: Should I shower, shave or prep my skin?

A: Shower the evening before your procedure with the antiseptic sponges provided. You do not need to shave your skin. The pre-operative nurses will prep your skin. They have a special clipper to remove the hair safely. You will also be taking another shower at the hospital that morning with another round of antiseptic sponges to keep your skin clean.

Q: Can I eat or drink that morning?

A: No. You must not eat or drink anything after midnight the night before. However, it is OK to take a little sip of water with any prescribed medication. If you are a diabetic, you are usually asked **not** to take your diabetes medication. Your physician will advise you on which medication you can take. If you are still unsure, please call your cardiac surgeon to clarify any questions.

Q: Where does my family go?

A: You and your family member/friend will check in at the main desk. You will be brought down to the pre-operative area where nurses will greet you and prepare you for your procedure. One family member /friend will then be permitted to walk with you up to the entrance of the OR suite. Your family member/friend will be directed back up to the main desk where they will be given a beeper to notify them when the procedure is completed.

Q: Should I bring my belongings with me?

A: We ask that you keep all of your belongings (eye glasses, hearing aids, clothing, and dentures) with your family member/friend. If you have no family member/friend with you, the nurses will place these valuables in our safe or locked bin.

Q: How long will the procedure take?

A: It can vary from patient to patient. Most often, the procedure can range from 3 to 4 hours. Don't be alarmed. The physician will speak to your family after the procedure. They do not send a liaison.

Q: Will I receive any medication to relax me that morning?

A: Yes. You will be given a pill to relax you before the procedure after your skin has been prepped.

Q: What if I have a fever or get sick before the procedure?

A: Call the cardiac surgery office immediately and let them know! Any new cough or sore throat must be addressed.

Q: Do I have to remove my jewelry?

A: Yes. You may have some swelling in your hands and fingers after your procedure, and we do not want anything to get lost!

FAQs for the day of the procedure

Q: How many visitors are allowed in the Cardiac Surgery Intensive Care area once the procedure is over?

A: Two immediate family members/friends are allowed at a time. This first visit is short. Your family member/friend may call to ask how you are doing (numbers will be on your visiting information sheet). Also, we ask that one family member/friend is chosen as the primary communicator with the staff.

Q: Will I have tubes in me?

A: Yes. Equipment is all temporary, but does include a bladder catheter, and IVs. Also, you will hear several beeps and buzzing around you. You will have a specially trained nurse assigned to you. In addition, there will be nurse practitioners, and a critical care physician who will be caring for you. This care will involve frequent evaluations of your progress, and may include waking you up during the night for these assessments.

Q: When will my breathing tube be removed?

A: It is usually removed in the operating room but may be left in place for a short period of time while you are in the intensive care unit.

Q: Will I have pain or discomfort?

A: Probably not. If you do, it will be managed with pain medication and gentle repositioning.

Q: Will I remember anything about that first day?

A: Probably not. The anesthesia may cause you not to have a memory of the first day.

Q: Will I be in the Cardiac Surgery Intensive Care area for my entire stay?

A: No. When ready, you will be transferred to the A2 step-down unit. This could be as early as the next day. The A2 step-down unit consists of all private rooms. You will be cared for by nurses who have been specially trained in post-TAVR care.

FAQs for post-operative day one of the procedure

Q: When can I get out of bed?

A: The day after your procedure. You will also be up in the chair most of the day. You will be assisted to start moving as soon as possible.

Q: Will I still have any tubes in me?

A: You will have a telemetry monitor on and external pacemaker pads. You will have one or two small IV sites.

Q: When can I eat?

A: On the first day, you will be started on some ice chips. Then, we will progress you to unsweetened liquids and eventually solids once you pass gas. Don't be alarmed if you lost your appetite. This is normal. In addition to other test, your blood sugar will be checked by finger stick. It's important to keep tight control of your blood sugar in the immediate post op period. We would appreciate that your family does not bring to you any food or drinks from outside the unit without first checking with your nurse.

Q: Is there anyone who can help me set up to have help at home or prepare me for a rehabilitation facility?

A: Yes. We have special nurses called case managers and home care coordinators who will discuss your discharge planning once you are on the A2 step-down unit.

Q: While in the hospital, what tests might be done to me?

A: Physical Exam, telemetry to monitor your hearts rhythm, an echocardiogram, an electrocardiogram, a chest x-ray, and blood test.

Post-operative day 2 through discharge:

Q: Why should I cough and deep breathe?

A: These exercises help expand your lungs and prevent pneumonia.

Q: Can I shower here at the hospital?

A: You will be able to shower on the third day post procedure if you are able.

Q: Do I need to wear those white stockings?

A: Yes, you need to wear them for the next six weeks. They will promote circulation.

Q: Will I get stronger?

A: Yes. Your cardiac rehab nurses will walk you daily, and you will be getting out of bed to the chair for every meal.

Q: Is it normal if I don't move my bowels right away?

A: Yes. It will probably take a day or two. You will be receiving a stool softener daily to help prevent constipation.

Q: Will I have trouble sleeping?

A: Many patients have vivid dreams and sleep deprivation during their recovery process.

Q: Does Valley offer holistic services?

A: Yes. Your nurse can request a consult for holistic services for you, which may include soothing music, use of essential oils, and light massage during your recovery.