

Showering with Your LVAD

When you have a left ventricular assist device

This handout explains how to take a shower when you have an LVAD.

Before You Shower

- Switch to battery use on your LVAD. Make sure the batteries are fully charged.
- Set up your bathroom with everything you will need for the shower. Be sure to have clean towels for drying off afterward.
- Rest before you shower, and avoid rushing. Give yourself plenty of time to do all the steps needed.

Cover the Driveline

- Use **only** Aquaguard or Glad Press-n-Seal to cover the driveline.
- When you cover the driveline, make sure your abdomen is stretched out to avoid having folds or gaps in the cover. This means you should be lying down or sitting in a reclined position.
- When sealing off the driveline, pinch the covering together underneath the line. This helps make a better seal around the line and reduces gaps.
- Use Microfoam tape, Blenderm tape or white athletic tape to tape the edges of the covering. Tape the sides first, then the top and the bottom.
- You do not need to cover the anchor. If you want, you can remove it.



For safety, you must wear the LVAD shower bag around your neck the entire time you are in the shower (see page 2).

Place Your LVAD in the Shower Bag

If you have a HeartWare:

- Unzip the shower bag. Pinch the toggle and pull to release the drawstring. Then, either:
 - Remove the LVAD controller and batteries from your carrier and place them in the bag, OR
 - Remove the shoulder strap from the carrier. Place the entire LVAD carrier, with controller and batteries still secured, into the bag.
- Make sure your driveline faces toward the side of the shower bag that has the zipper stopper, not the side with the zipper.
- Pinch the toggle and tighten the drawstring closed, then zip the outer layer closed. Be sure not to snag your driveline on the zipper.

If you have a HeartMate:

- Unclip the 1st layer of the shower bag, then unzip the 2nd layer.
- Remove your controller and batteries from your carrier. Place your controller into the designated slot. Place the batteries side-by-side in the lower section of the shower bag.
- Zip the bag closed. Make sure that **only** the driveline is coming out of the red slot.
- Close the top layer of the bag and clip to secure.

During the Shower

- **Wear the shower bag the entire time you are in the shower.** Do **not** have someone hold it for you, set it on a shower seat or counter, or hang it on a shower hook.
- Make sure the shower bag is on the side of your body where your driveline exit site is located. This will help prevent pulling.
- Watch your position carefully. While it is OK to get the covering wet, do **not** point the shower stream directly onto the driveline covering.

After the Shower

- Find a **dry place** to sit and to place your shower bag.
- Carefully remove your tape and covering from the driveline.
- Dry around the driveline site with a clean towel.

- Check to see if your dressing got wet:
 - If your exit site is very wet or coming off, you must change the dressing.
 - If the dressing is only damp around the edges and the bandage is intact, you do not need to change the dressing.
- Dry off the shower bag and remove the LVAD from the bag. Leave the bag open and hang it on a hook to dry.
- Place the LVAD into your regular carrier.

More Tips

- If you have an alarm during the shower:
 - Finish your shower promptly.
 - After you dry off, call your VAD coordinator as instructed.
- If you change dressings every week, time your showers so you can change your dressing after you shower.

Questions?

Your questions are important. Call your doctor or healthcare provider if you have questions or concerns.

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