CTEPH Recovery Timeline

FOR PULMONARY THROMBOENDARTERECTOMY

Hospital Stay

Most people spend approximately two weeks in the hospital. Length of stay depends on patients’:

- Physical condition before surgery
- Oxygen needs
- Response to surgery
- Complications after surgery
- Other medical problems

Usually, patients will have two tests—an echocardiogram and ventilation-perfusion lung scan around the time they are discharged.

1 to 3 Months After Surgery

Patients can rapidly improve from surgery. But pulmonary thromboendarterectomy is major surgery. It takes a few months to fully recover.

- In the first 4 to 6 weeks, avoid lifting more than 10 pounds.
- Participate in a guided exercise program. This will help rebuild your conditioning and stamina. For some people, this involves inpatient rehab. Other people may need either cardiac or pulmonary rehab. Some people can do their exercises at home.
- Remain on a regimen of blood thinners (anticoagulants) for the rest of your life.
- Most people show no evidence of pulmonary hypertension after surgery. Those who do may need medications to control it. Your doctor will review your best ongoing treatment options.

All people with CTEPH need to be receiving blood thinners (anticoagulants) for the rest of their lives, unless bleeding issues develop.

All people with CTEPH need regular follow-up after surgery. Your doctor can recommend the best follow-up plan for you.

All people with CTEPH should exercise after surgery. A regular exercise program should be followed for the rest of their lives.

Learn more by going to chestfoundation.org/cteph
3 to 6 Months After Surgery

Most, but not all, patients have significant improvement and return to nearly normal living.

- Keep exercising. This will maintain and continue improving your heart and lung strength.
- Patients typically repeat an echocardiogram. They sometimes get a ventilation-perfusion lung scan. This helps evaluate your improvement after surgery.
- Some patients will develop pulmonary hypertension again. But it’s a different form not related to blood clots.
- Call your doctor right away if you have:
  - Shortness of breath
  - Swelling
  - Fainting

More Than 6 Months After Surgery

Most people return to regular life, but they have to take blood thinners. See your doctor regularly for exams and echocardiograms. This helps to make sure CTEPH doesn’t come back. Look for returning symptoms, such as:

- Shortness of breath
- Chest pain
- Fainting
- Swelling

If you experience any of these symptoms, contact your doctor.

- Most people with CTEPH, but not all, improve to the point where they can stop oxygen therapy.
- Some people with CTEPH will continue to get blood clots. For some, repeating the surgery can lead to better results.

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