

Your valve surgery and use of blood thinners

What is valve surgery?

Valve surgery is an operation done to repair or replace a heart valve that is not functioning properly. There are two types of surgery: valve repair and valve replacement.

What type of valve surgery will I have?

Your doctor will discuss which type of valve surgery is best for you based on your heart valve condition.

What kind of valve will be used?

There are two types of replacement valves used:

Bioprosthetic valve. This is made of human or animal tissue.

Mechanical valve. This is made of metal and plastic.

How will I know what heart valve is best?

Your doctor will discuss the type of heart valve best suited for you before the surgery.

Are there any special instructions to follow?

Yes. What you need to do depends on the type of valve surgery you have.

Valve repair surgery:

Your doctor will decide whether you need blood thinner medication after your surgery.

Valve replacement surgery:

- **Bioprosthetic valve** – you will need to take blood thinner medication for 3 months or as directed by your doctor.
- **Mechanical valve** – you will need to take blood thinners for the rest of your life with careful monitoring done by your doctor.

How do I use blood thinners?

After your surgery, you will receive information on the use of blood thinners while you are on 5 South. You will also receive an information package and instructions related to your valve.