

**SIMPLE PRECAUTIONS FOR PATIENTS IMPLANTED WITH A  
BJORK-SHILEY CONVEXO-CONCAVE HEART VALVE**

BSCC heart valve recipients should take the time to institute the following simple precautions. These are suggestions to protect your health and well-being should you suspect a strut fracture of your BSCC heart valve, or a heart problem, or become seriously ill.

1. Make sure you have the correct name, address, and emergency room telephone number of your hospital and your treating physician readily available and located on your person at all times. It is also an excellent idea to have an extra copy of this same information by your telephone at home and at the office, and perhaps also in a highly visible and easily located place at home. Make sure your family members and close friends know where you have placed this information.
2. It is extremely important that you be transported to a hospital that has the capability of performing emergency cardiac surgery and that can replace your BSCC heart valve if necessary. Not all hospitals have the ability to do this, so you must select your hospital carefully. **Discuss this with your cardiologist or cardiac surgeon.** Your selected hospital should have on staff at all times a cardiac surgeon with an appropriate heart surgery team and medical equipment, including a replacement heart valve prosthesis. Make sure your family members and close friends know this information as well.
3. You should have written instructions on your person at all times advising any Emergency Rescue Personnel or Ambulance Personnel to transport you to your selected hospital and to alert them that you are in transit to the hospital. The hospital emergency room personnel should be further advised that you are implanted with a BSCC heart valve and that a properly made series of chest x-rays from the correct views should be made immediately upon your arrival at the hospital to determine whether or not your BSCC heart valve is intact. If your valve is not intact or is not functioning properly, then open-heart surgery can be performed without delay.

4. If you are going to travel to a location some distance away from your designated hospital, you should determine prior to traveling the correct name, address, and telephone number of a hospital in the area where you will be traveling that can perform emergency cardiac surgery and can replace your BSCC heart valve if necessary.
  
5. Take the time to ask your treating physician what additional precautions he or she would recommend.
  
6. There are several known warning signs that may indicate that a BSCC heart valve is not functioning properly. You and your family members should be familiar with these. Also, talk with your physician about this subject.
  - a. A classic sign of an outlet strut fracture is that the mechanical heart valve will stop "clicking." You will not be able to hear the normal sound of the metallic clicking of the disc as it opens and closes. You might want to have someone listen to the normal metallic clicking sound of your BSCC heart valve for a few minutes on more than one occasion so he or she will be able to recognize the normal clicking sound. If there is an outlet strut fracture of a BSCC heart valve, there will be a noticeable absence of this normal clicking sound.
  
  - b. A sudden sharp chest pain or tight pressure in your chest that does not go away after a few minutes.
  
  - c. Sudden loss of consciousness, even if it is regained shortly thereafter.
  
  - d. Sudden, severe shortness of breath during normal activity.
  
  - e. Sudden irregular or rapid heart beat.

If you would experience any of the above warning signs, we recommend that you immediately contact your physician.