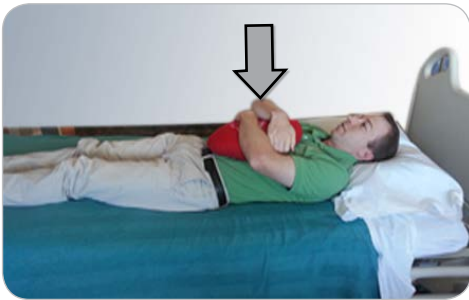


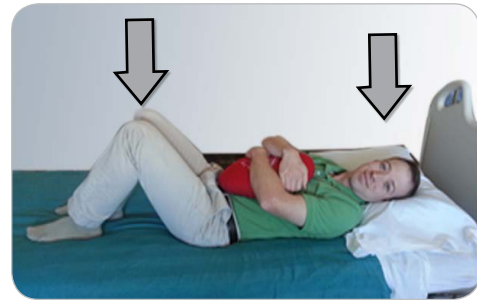
# Protecting Your Breastbone After Heart Surgery

After heart surgery, you need to take special care of your breastbone (sternum) while it heals.

- **Do not push, pull, or lift anything with your arms.** This could make your sternum separate and slow down healing. Pushing, pulling, or lifting could also open your surgical incision (the cut on your chest). This could cause an infection.
- **Follow the steps below every time you get out of bed.** See the back of this fact sheet for directions on getting back into bed safely.



- 1 Hold on to your Heart Pillow with both hands or cross your arms over your chest.



- 2 Bend your knees as shown and turn your head to the side of the bed you will get up on.



- 3 Roll onto your side.



- 4 Keep your knees bent. Bring your feet and lower legs off the edge of the bed.



- 5 Sit up. If you need a helper, he should place one of his hands under your lower shoulder and the other hand on your upper shoulder, guiding you into a sitting position.

Follow these steps to get back into bed safely:



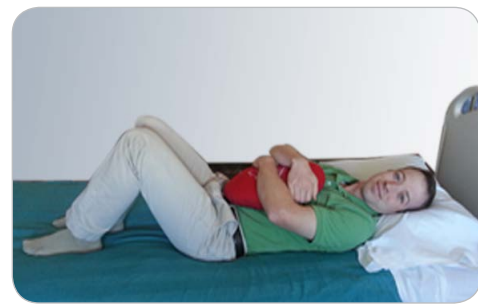
- 1 Sit on the edge of the bed. Make sure that you are positioned so that when you lie down your head will be on the pillow.



- 2 Hold your heart pillow with both hands or cross your arms in front of your chest. Lie down on your side. Do not lean back.



- 3 Keep your knees bent and bring your feet onto the bed.



- 4 Roll onto your back with your body and legs moving together in one motion.

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