



Sternum Support Harness

www.hearthugger.com



Your User Guide

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HEART HUGGER[®] has two Shoulder Straps attached to a Velcro[®] Chest Belt by plastic Side Release Buckles and an upper and lower Adjustable Velcro[®] Strap to hold the Handles in place.

For best results, review this information on your own and again in preoperative orientation with your Caregiver (surgeon, nursing staff or family member). *If possible, fit, adjust and practice using HEART HUGGER[®] while at home before your surgery, over a T-shirt or loose garment.*

NOTE: HEART HUGGER[®] is put on by the Caregiver and operated by the Patient. HEART HUGGER[®] is Not a Medical Binder.

BEFORE YOU DO ANYTHING: WATCH THE INSTRUCTIONAL VIDEO OR DVD
Follow the steps below to fit and adjust HEART HUGGER[®]. Refer to the Instructional Diagram (page 3) and the At Home guide (page 4).

GETTING THE MOST FROM YOUR HEART HUGGER[®]

After surgery, **do not put HEART HUGGER[®] on by yourself**, have your caregiver help you. HEART HUGGER[®] is designed to go under lines or tubes.

Step 1 (patient) Have your caregiver place your arm through the first Shoulder Strap. **DO NOT** stretch your arm behind you like you are putting on a coat. Leave your arm at your side.

Step 2 (caregiver) Help patient lean forward in bed. Drape the Velcro[®] Chest Belt across the patient's back and have the patient lie back against bed.

Step 3 (caregiver) Release the second Shoulder Strap from the Chest Belt with the Side Release Buckle and reattach it (over the shoulder) to the Chest Belt coming under the arm.

Step 4 (caregiver) Secure Handles in place with the Adjustable Velcro[®] Straps above and below the Handles.

Step 5 (caregiver) Adjust Shoulder Strap lengths so that Handles are level at about the nipple line on men or just above the breasts on women. (See picture page 4)

Step 6 (caregiver) Adjust Chest Belt on each side so the Handles remain about a hand's width apart and the Chest Belt is flat against the patient's body, readjusting the Adjustable Velcro[®] Straps above and below the Handles.

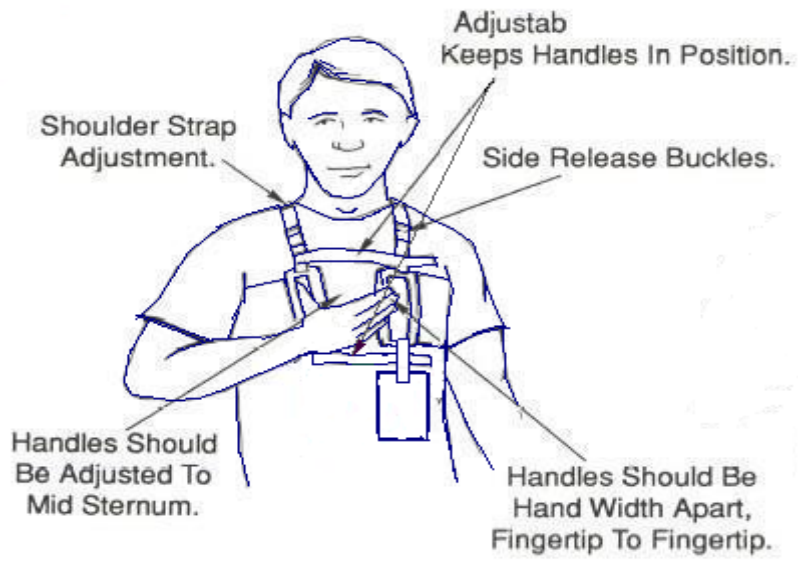
Step 7 (patient) Using fingertips only, squeeze the Handles together (using one or both hands). If the Handles touch each other they are too close together – move the handles farther apart by readjusting the Chest Belt on both sides. You should feel encircling support around the entire rib cage when Handles are squeezed.

Squeeze the Handles together with one or both hands to support your chest when doing your breathing exercises, when changing positions in bed and when standing up or sitting down.

As you recover, moving the Handles farther apart may provide more support.

You will continue using HEART HUGGER[®] throughout your recovery. HEART HUGGER[®] will need to be readjusted to fit over your street clothes when you go home, continuing to give you the wound support you need for 4-6 weeks.

The pouch included with your HEART HUGGER[®] can be used by your nursing staff in the hospital for placement of the telemetry unit that keeps track of your vital signs. Place the strap on the pouch through the slot at the bottom of one of the Handles. You can continue to use the pouch at home to hold a remote or phone if you wish.



HEART HUGGER® is not a medical binder

CORRECT

Adjust the Handles centered mid-sternum, keeping Handles as parallel as possible, one hand width apart.

Note: HEART HUGGER® will become more effective over time with practice and readjustment.



INCORRECT

If Handles are too low and are spread apart at the bottom, lean forward from the back of the bed and have your caregiver pull down on the back of the Chest Belt while lifting Handles upward, until strap is flat against the back and Handles are above the breasts (for women) or mid-sternum (for men).



FITTING WOMEN

For women, the Handles rest higher on the chest above the breasts. The Handles might be a bit flared at the bottom. This is okay as long as you can get to them with your fingertips and squeeze the Handles together to tighten the Chest Belt.

For some women it is more comfortable to wear a favorite front-hook bra or snug t-shirt from home under the hospital gown before fitting



FINE TUNING

1. The most common problem is a lack of encircling support because the Handles are too close together. To fix: adjust the Chest Belt to move Handles farther apart.
2. If the patient slides down in bed, the HEART HUGGER® may ride up their back, leaving the Handles below the chest and flared out. Have the caregiver gently pull the Chest Belt down in back, bringing the Handles back to their proper position.
3. Heart Hugger becomes more effective over time with continued use and fine tuned fitting adjustments.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q: When I squeeze the Handles together, it doesn't seem to give me any support?

A: If there is not enough tension in the Chest Belt the Handles will touch or pass each other when squeezed together. To get more tension in the Chest Belt, have your caregiver move the Handles away from each other. Simply undo the Velcro® Chest Belt holding each Handle and pull it towards your back bringing the Handle farther away from the center of your chest. Do the same for both sides. Make adjustments in small increments keeping the Handles a hand width apart centered over your sternum.

Q: The Chest Belt is rubbing under my armpits: How do I fix this?

A: You may have the shoulder straps too tight. Loosen the shoulder straps and lower the Chest Belt away from armpits. Be sure to make adjustments to both shoulder straps to keep the Handles even in front.

Q: How high should the Handles be?

A: For men, Handles are mid sternum, with the middle of the Handles at the nipple line, equal distance away from your sternal wound. For women the Handles should rest above the breasts. In both cases the Handles should be about one hand's width apart so that you can reach both Handles and squeeze with one or both hands.

Q: Can I use both of my hands?

A: Yes: Sometimes it is easier to squeeze the Handles together initially with two hands. If you do this, we recommend that once together you hold the Handles with one hand, keeping the other hand free.

Q: The back of the Chest Belt rides up on my back. How do I fix this?

A: If the back of the Chest Belt is riding up your back while sitting down or lying in bed, lean forward at your hip and have a family member or caregiver gently tug the back of the Chest Belt downward while lightly lifting the Handles back up into proper position.

Q: How long do I wear HEART HUGGER®?

A: We recommend that you wear HEART HUGGER® from the time it is put on in the ICU, throughout your hospital stay and (readjusted to be) worn over your street clothes for 4-6 weeks at home. You should wear it day and night except when you are in the shower.

Q: Can HEART HUGGER® be washed?

A: We recommend that it be soaked in a mild detergent and air dried.

Q: What is this extra pouch for?

A: The pouch included with your HEART HUGGER® is meant to be used by your nursing staff while in the hospital for placement of the telemetry unit that keeps track of your vital signs. Place the strap on the pouch through the slot at the bottom of one of the Handles. Continue to use the pouch at home to hold a remote or phone if you wish.

Q: What is HEART HUGGER® made of?

A: HEART HUGGER® has two cotton Shoulder Straps attached to a Velcro® Chest Belt by ABS plastic Side Release Buckles and an Adjustable Velcro® Strap to hold the ABS Plastic Handles in place. HEART HUGGER® contains no latex.

Q: Will this device add to my risk of pneumonia or other respiratory complication?

A: No. Unlike abdominal or breast binders, which if left bound to the patient after surgery can restrict the patient's ability to clear their lungs; Heart Hugger is designed to remain passive and is worn loose over a gown or clothing, allowing unrestricted expansion of the lungs. The only time the chest belt tightens up is when the patient is squeezing the handles together. This should only be done when the patient needs support when coughing, sneezing or moving and the handles should not be squeezed together for extended periods of time.

Q: Is HEART HUGGER® a medical binder?

A: No. Heart Hugger is not an abdominal or breast binder. It is designed specifically to address your need for support without binding and adding to your risk of pneumonia or other respiratory complications.

CUSTOMER AND CAREGIVER SUPPORT

- You Can:
1. Watch the instructional video
 2. Review our “Patients Guide to Heart Surgery”
 3. Review Nursing Guidelines for inpatient care.
 4. Reprint these instructions in larger type

HEART HUGGER® Sternum Support Harness was invented by a Silicon Valley engineer while recovering from his own bypass surgery. The pillow he was given in the hospital did not provide the wound support and pain relief he needed during his postoperative recovery experience.

Wound Support: After surgery, your lungs need to expand. That is why your deep breathing exercises (Respiratory Therapy) are important to your recovery. During surgery the ventilator was breathing for you. This caused some fluid buildup in your lungs. Your breathing exercises will help you cough this fluid up. Each time you cough, your lungs press outward against your ribcage and sternum. This puts stress on the wires holding your sternum together and can be painful. HEART HUGGER® helps you support your surgical wound.

Pain Management: HEART HUGGER® is put on in the ICU just before you begin your first Respiratory Therapy exercises. HEART HUGGER®'s uniform encircling support allows you to support your whole chest wall during the coughing that accompanies your Respiratory Therapy exercises. Whenever you stand up, sit down, go to the toilet, take walks, when your caregiver helps you change positions in bed and especially anytime you have to cough or sneeze, **squeeze the Handles together.**

Confidence, Security & Independence: Simply squeezing the HEART HUGGER® Handles together whenever you cough, sneeze or make uncomfortable movements provides you with uniform encircling support for the whole chest. HEART HUGGER® gives you the confidence and independence to be aggressive with your Respiratory Therapy, provides wound support and manages pain, helping to speed your recovery.

HEART HUGGER® is designed to remain loose and passive until you need support. The Chest Belt only provides support when the handles are squeezed together.

HEART HUGGER® Sternum Support Harness is a U.S. FDA Classified Medical Device. It is used in more than 350 open-heart and cardiovascular surgical programs worldwide. More information and Clinical Guidelines are available at



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