



For Immediate Release

Heart Hugger by General Cardiac Technology, Eases Pain of Medicare's Decision to No Longer Cover Hospital Errors

Los Gatos, Ca (March 2009) - Mediastinitis is just one of the Hospital Acquired Infections (HAI) that Medicare will no longer cover starting in financial year 2009. Heart Hugger - Sternum Support Harness can help prevent this and other complications after Cardiothoracic Surgery. Heart Hugger is Medicare approved and FDA classified.

Heart Hugger helps hospitals save money by reducing the chance of infection and post operative complications. Without sternal support, patients lack the confidence to continue with respiratory therapy exercises and coughing due to extreme pain. This results in longer hospital stays and increased complication rates, which will now be paid for by Hospitals, not Medicare.

Until recently, methods used to attempt sternal stability following a sternotomy have been folded sheets, towels, pillows and even stuffed animals. These methods provide no encircling support to the rib cage, are unavailable to the patient when ambulating, and provide no lateral support to stabilize the wound and prevent dehiscence. These outdated methods can easily fall to the floor, inviting infectious bacteria back to the wound.

Heart Hugger solves these problems by taking a completely different approach. Heart Hugger consists of shoulder straps suspending a four inch wide belt around the chest, finished with handles on either end. Heart Hugger is applied to the patient in the ICU immediately after extubation. Worn over clothing the chest belt is adjusted to center the handles over the sternal wound, the patient's hand width apart. As the patient squeezes the handles together the chest belt tightens, supporting the chest wall and stabilizing the sternal wound. Continuously worn by the patient there is no risk of it falling to the floor and there are no limitations for use during ambulation. During the critical period immediately following discharge, Heart Hugger is worn for 2-4 weeks at home helping patients return to their normal activities.

What Doctors and Patients say about Heart Hugger:

"I have been a cardiothoracic surgeon for over 20 years practicing in Ohio. Recently I underwent a full sternotomy...[and]experienced the benefits of Heart Hugger. The stability obtained...with Heart Hugger was vitally important to me... I now recommend the Heart Hugger for ALL of my patients..."

Peter M. Pavlina MD, Kettering Cardiothoracic & Vascular Surgeons, Inc., Surgeon & Patient-2007

"...I used a heart pillow as well but,...I found Heart Hugger to be twice as effective."

Dennis S., Patient-2005

"..Thank you to everyone involved in making, marketing, and distributing it. I had CABG on December 1, 2008... I cannot imagine how I would have gotten in and out of bed without Heart Hugger. I believe that my recovery would have taken a lot longer without it..."

J. I. "Belle" McCann, Patient-2008

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