

# **DISCHARGE INSTRUCTIONS AFTER A PACEMAKER IMPLANT**

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We wish you a quick recovery. Please read follow the instructions in this handout and let us know if you have any questions or concerns.

## **Traveling home**

For your safety, a **responsible adult must drive you home after the procedure**. You will be drowsy from the medication used during the procedure. Your driver should be ready to take you home by 10:00 a.m. the morning you leave the hospital. **Please talk to your doctor about when you can safely drive again.**

## **How will I feel?**

You may feel discomfort at the device implant site during the first 48 hours after the procedure. Your doctor will tell you which medications you can take for pain relief. Please tell your doctor or nurse if your symptoms are severe or last longer than 48 hours.

**Do not get the incision wet for 5 days after the procedure. You may shower (do not scrub the incision) on:** \_\_\_\_\_

**You may remove your bandage on:** \_\_\_\_\_

**If you have Steri-Strips, remove them on:** \_\_\_\_\_ **If they fall off before this date, it is OK.**

**Other instructions:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Wash your hands before you touch your incision. Do not cover the incision unless your doctor or nurse tells you to do so. Do not use creams, lotions or ointments on the incision.**

**LOOK** at your incision every day. **CALL** your doctor if you have any signs of infection, such as:

- More drainage, bleeding or oozing than normal
- An opening in the incision
- The incision area is red, warm and/or swollen
- A temperature of 101 degrees F (38.4 degrees C) or higher
- You feel shaky, chilly or dizzy
- Also call if you have heart palpitations

## Activity guidelines

Talk to your doctor about when it is OK for you to return to work and your normal activities.

### During the first 6 weeks after the implant:

- DO NOT lift anything that weighs more than 10 pounds with the arm on the side of your body that has the pacemaker.
- DO NOT push or pull heavy objects. Avoid doing things like shoveling snow, mowing the lawn, etc.
- DO NOT golf, swim, bowl or play tennis
- If you need to hold your arms above your shoulders, go slow, and do not keep your arms up for more than a few minutes.

### Throughout your recovery:

- DO take daily walks to help your recovery.
- Stop doing any activity that makes you overtired.

## Follow-Up Visits and Device Checks

You will have a follow-up visit for a device check within 6 weeks of your procedure.

This first follow-up appointment is critical, because we will make changes to your device to help it last as long as possible.

### Remote Monitoring

Remote monitoring uses a phone (cellular or land line) to send information about your pacemaker to the Device Clinic.

- Transmissions are sent every 3 months and are billed as office visits. Call your insurance company to check coverage.
- Alerts are sent if there are changes to your heart rhythm or the device in between transmissions. There is no charge for these transmissions.
- The monitor will be given to you in the Device Clinic or mailed to your home.
- There is no charge for the remote monitor; it is included in the cost of the device implant.
- You will get more information about remote monitoring before you leave the hospital.

Follow-up checks can be done remotely (from home) or in-person at the Device Clinic. You can choose the best method for you.

You will need a device check every 3 months and 1 in-clinic check if you use remote monitoring.

If you choose to come into the clinic, you will do so every 6 months .

Remote monitoring is the best way to have your device checked because it lets the Device Clinic know within 24 hours if there are changes to your device or heart rhythm. Otherwise, changes will only be found every 6 months.

## Device Information

### What does therapy from the device feel like?

You may not even notice when your device corrects your heart rhythm. Some patients do feel electrical impulses from the pacemaker, but they do not usually cause any pain.

### Will electrical devices affect my device?

- You can safely use electric blankets, heating pads, cordless phones and microwave ovens. These electronics will not interfere with the function of your implanted device.
- Hold your cell/mobile phone on the opposite side of where the device was implanted. Do not place a cell/mobile phone directly against your chest or on the same side as your device.
- Avoid strong electric or magnetic fields. These include some industrial equipment, ham radios, high intensity radio waves (found near large electrical generators, power plants, or radio frequency transmission towers), and arc resistance welders.
- Strong magnetic fields stop the device from monitoring your heart rhythm, but do not damage the device. Once you are out of these fields, the device works normally.
- Other items to avoid are TENS units, muscle stimulators, radiation therapy, mattresses and jewelry that contain magnets, welding equipment and chain saws.

- Walk quickly through entrances where anti-theft devices are being used.

If you have any questions about electronic equipment and your device, please call the device manufacturer.

### **What should I do about my device if I need surgery?**

If you need surgery, call the Device Clinic to find out if you need to have your pacemaker reprogrammed before surgery. Please make sure your pacemaker is checked in-clinic within the 12 months before your surgery.

### **How long will my device last?**

Pacemakers last 5 to 10 years, depending on how often it is used. You will need to have your battery changed when it gets low. Keeping your follow-up appointments in the Device Clinic lets your healthcare team keep track of the device and battery life.

### **ID Card**

You will get a temporary ID card that tells you the type of device and leads you have, the device manufacturer, the date of the device implant and the doctor's name who implanted the device. You will get a permanent card from the device company within 3 months. **It is important to carry this card at all times in case you need medical attention.**

### **MRI Information**

If you need an MRI, call your device manufacturer or Device Clinic to see if you can safely have an MRI. The manufacturer's phone number is on your device ID card.

### **Managing your condition**

Because a pacemaker is only one part of a complete treatment program, it is important for you to take your medications, make changes in your diet, live a healthy lifestyle, keep your follow-up appointments, and be an active member of your treatment team.

### **If You Have Questions or Symptoms**

Please call the nursing staff in the Device Clinic  
at:

**216.444.6483 or 800.223.2273 ext. 46483**  
8:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., Monday through Friday.

At other times, please call:

**800.490.6121**  
to speak to a registered nurse 24/7.

or

**800.223.2273**

ask for the EP Fellow on call

## NOTES

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# Cleveland Clinic

9500 Euclid Avenue, Cleveland, Ohio 44195  
[clevelandclinic.org/heart](http://clevelandclinic.org/heart)

### DEVICE CLINIC

216.444.6483 or 800.223.2273 ext. 46483

### ELECTROPHYSIOLOGY AND PACING

Appointments: 216.444.6697 or  
800.223.2273 ext. 46697

*This information is not intended to replace the medical advice of your doctor or healthcare provider. Please consult your healthcare provider for advice about a specific medical condition.*

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