AFTER A PACEMAKER IMPLANT

Discharge Instructions

FOR YOUR SAFETY, A RESPONSIBLE ADULT MUST DRIVE YOU HOME AFTER THE PROCEDURE. THE MEDICATION YOU RECEIVED DURING THE PROCEDURE MAKES YOU DROWSY. WE WISH YOU A VERY SPEEDY RECOVERY. HERE IS SOME IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT CARING FOR YOURSELF WHEN YOU GO HOME.

IMPLANT SITE DISCOMFORT

You may feel discomfort at the device implant site during the first 48-72 hours after the procedure. The doctor or nurse will tell you what medications you can take for pain relief. Please tell your doctor or nurse if your symptoms are prolonged or severe.

TAKING CARE OF YOUR WOUND SITE

Proper care of postoperative incisions will greatly enhance the healing process. Keeping the area clean and well cared for will decrease risk of infection.

- If your wound is covered by a waterproof dressing, like AQUACEL®, do not remove the dressing for 7 to 10 days or until you follow up with your doctor. If the dressing is not waterproof, remove the large dressing over the Pacemaker the morning after discharge if the dressing was not removed in the hospital. Do not remove the steri-strips, they will either fall off or we will remove them at your 2-week follow up appointment.
- **Shower** as usual the morning after discharge protecting the incision site with help of a plastic wrap. It is ok to get the incision and steri-strips wet. Subsequent days it is OK to wash/rinse the site gently with soap, don’t scrub the incision area, gently dry with a clean towel (do not rub).
- Avoid submerging your wound in a bathtub, swimming pool or Jacuzzi for 6 weeks.
- Some discomfort such as mild redness, itching and swelling may occur. These symptoms are part of the normal healing process. Don’t scratch the wound if it starts to itch.
- Protect your incision area from excessive sunlight.

WHEN TO CALL YOUR DOCTOR

Call your physician right away if you have any of these signs of infection:

- Any drainage, bleeding or oozing from the insertion site
- opening of the incision where the device was implanted
- Redness, swelling or warmth around the device insertion site
- Increased body temperature (greater than 101 degrees Fahrenheit or 38.4 degrees Celsius)
- Increasing discomfort related to the wound.

If you are experiencing symptoms that might be related to your pacemaker such as

- dizziness,
- palpitations,
- fast or slow heart beats

ARE THERE ANY ACTIVITY RESTRICTIONS?

These activity guidelines should be followed the first week after your procedure:

- You may move your arms normally and do not have to restrict arm motion during normal activities. However, do not lift your elbow above shoulder level.
- Do not lift objects that weigh more than 10 pounds for 6 weeks after the procedure.
- Avoid activities that require pushing or pulling heavy objects, such as shoveling the snow or mowing the lawn.
- Stop any activity before you become over-tired.
- For 6 weeks after the procedure, avoid golfing, swimming, tennis and bowling.
- Try to walk as much as possible for exercise.

SETTING UP YOUR REMOTE PM/ICD HOME MONITOR

You will likely go home with a remote home monitor which transmits recordings from your pacemaker or implantable defibrillator device to the doctor. These monitors are generally paired to a cell phone adaptor and come ready to plug into a power outlet in your bedroom. Please follow the recommended instructions for set up.

If you are leaving your home for more than 30 days, it is recommended to carry the home monitor with you to continue transmitting recordings to your doctor.
WILL ANY ELECTRICAL DEVICES INTERFERE WITH MY DEVICE?

- Electric blankets, heating pads, and microwave ovens can be used and will not interfere with the function of your pacemaker.
- A cellular phone should be used on the side opposite of where the device was implanted. Cellular phones should not be placed directly against the chest or on the same side as your device.
- You will need to avoid strong electric or magnetic fields, such as: some industrial equipment, ham radios, high intensity radio waves (found near large electrical generators, power plants, or radiofrequency transmission towers), and arc resistance welders.
- In strong magnetic fields, the device stops monitoring your heart rhythm. Once you are out of these fields, normal device function resumes and there is no damage to the device.
- If you must pass through entrances where anti-theft devices are being used, be sure to walk quickly through them.
- Do not undergo any tests that require magnetic resonance imaging (MRI).
- Your doctor or nurse can provide more information about what types of equipment may interfere with your device.

PACEMAKER ID CARD

You will receive a temporary ID card that tells you what type of pacemaker and leads you have, the device manufacturer, the date of the device implant and the doctor’s name who implanted the pacemaker. Within one month you will receive a permanent ID card from the device company. It is important to carry this card in case you need medical attention.

WHEN CAN I GO BACK TO WORK?

Your doctor or nurse will tell you when you can go back to work.

WHEN SHOULD I FOLLOW-UP?

- Call (602) 456 2342 to schedule this appointment if one was not made for you at the time of your discharge from the hospital. After the initial appointment you will have a important appointment in 3 months for pacemaker check when adjustments will made to the programming to increase device longevity. Please call our office and confirm your appointment.
The pacemaker check is performed at the Device Clinic and takes about 15 to 30 minutes. This first follow-up appointment is critical, because adjustments will be made that will prolong the life of your pacemaker. This appointment is for a device check with the electrophysiology nurse. If you need to see your doctor for follow-up care, you will need to schedule a separate appointment.

An echocardiogram may be performed as part of your first follow-up evaluation.

**WILL I NEED ANTIBIOTICS BEFORE DENTAL WORK?**

We recommend you take an antibiotic before dental work or surgery for 6 months.

**HOW OFTEN DO I NEED DEVICE CHECKS?**

After your first follow-up appointment, your pacemaker should be checked every 3 months, you may go home with a wireless telephone transmitter which sends daily reports to the clinic about your pacemaker function. You will receive instructions on how to use it prior to discharge. If you have difficulty using it at home bring it with you to your follow-up appointment.

**HOW LONG WILL MY DEVICE LAST?**

Pacemakers usually last 8 to 10 years, depending on how often it is used. When the battery becomes low, the pacemaker will need to be changed. By keeping your follow-up appointments in the Device Clinic, your health care team can monitor the function of your device and anticipate when it needs to be changed.

**HEALTH MAINTANENCE**

Pacemaker therapy is only one part of your treatment program. It is also important for you to take your medications, consume healthy diet, live a healthy lifestyle, keep your follow-up appointments, and be an active member of your treatment team.