

Your guide to living with a pacemaker

Information for patients

The purpose of this information leaflet is to provide you with post procedure and followup information, following your pacemaker implant

What is a pacemaker?

A pacemaker is used to treat slow heart rhythms. Your pacemaker will be monitoring your heart all the time, if it is too slow then the pacemaker will initiate a heart beat by providing a small electrical impulse to stimulate the heart. A pacemaker is set to work on demand so it doesn't necessarily mean that its constantly 'pacing' your heart. There are many different pacemaker settings, depending on your condition.

Pacemakers can also store and analyse information about your natural heart rhythms, which your specialist can then use to check how well your heart and pacemaker are working.

Aftercare at home

Gentle rotation of your shoulder is advised to prevent it from stiffening up. The area where the Pacemaker is implanted can often be tender after the implant, but this should resolve.

You can remove the dressing seven days after discharge. The pacemaker wound is routinely closed with surgical stitches and occasionally glue.

You can shower, but the wound should not be soaked for at least seven days. The stitches / glue should be fully washed off within three weeks.

The signs of infection include: redness, swelling, the wound feeling hot to the touch or painful, or discharge from the implant site.

If you are worried about your wound, please contact your Day Case Procedure Unit on **01422 224524**

Follow-Up

We will arrange for you to attend Cardiac Device Clinic, approximately 6-8 weeks after the pacemaker implant. You will be reviewed by a cardiac physiologist who will check the lead measurements and stored pacemaker information, and ensure your wound has healed.

Your pacemaker ID card will be sent through the post with your first time back appointment. It is vital that you carry this card with you at all times, as it gives health professionals important information about your pacemaker.

We will offer you a home monitor for your pacemaker; this device allows us to check your pacemaker from home and reduces trips to hospital. We will alternate between face-to-face and remote appointments. Frequency of follow-up is dependent on a variety of factors, which the cardiac physiology team will advise you on.

The home monitor posted out to you, its important you set this up when you get home and keep it plugged in. Please do **not** send any transmissions unless requested to by a Cardiac Physiologist. Home monitors send information automatically so you do not, unless instructed, need to do anything. The home monitor may light up from time to time, this is to do an update and seft test and its **not** asking you to send a transmission.

The cardiac physiology team will utilise the appointments (either face-to-face or remotely) to assess symptoms, the battery life of your pacemaker and optimise the pacemaker settings.

These appointments are extremely important to attend, to ensure your pacemaker is working well.

Getting back to normal

Returning to everyday activities is an essential part of recovery. It is usual for patients to return to work approximately one week after your implant. If you do a very heavy or physical job we ask that you keep the movements of your shoulder on the pacemaker side reduced until the follow-up.

Most individuals can resume normal activities and exercise as soon as they feel able. It is advisable to increase the amount you do gradually. Sports that involve vigorous shoulder movement (such as swimming or golf) can be resumed after three months. Contact sports are best avoided but if you must do these, then padding or protection over the implant site is advised.

Sexual activity

You can resume normal sexual activity as soon as you feel able.

Driving

The rules for driving are set by the DVLA (Swansea SA99 1TU). These are for your safety and for the safety of other road users.

- You should notify the DVLA if you have received a Pacemaker.
- You will need to complete a form to notify the DVLA.
- Patients with pacemakers, including after a generator change, are not allowed to drive a car (Group 1 licence) for one week after your implant.
- Patients with pacemakers, including generator changes are not permitted to drive a bus or lorry (Group 2 licence) for six weeks after your implant.

As with many regulations, things change over time. The latest guidance can be found at www.dvla.gov.uk. If you are unsure, please ask the team for advice.

Electrical interference and pacemakers

The risks from most appliances are theoretical risks and do not occur very often.

Most everyday household and office equipment can be safely operated, as there are built in features of the pacemaker to protect it from most sources of interference.

Any electrical equipment must be in good working order and properly earthed.

Handheld appliances and power tools should be kept at least 30cm away from the implant site to prevent any potential interference.

Hospitals & Dentists

It is essential to inform your doctor, dentist or surgeon that you have a pacemaker fitted as some procedures require precautions.

Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) was previously considered to be unsafe but newer pacemakers have been designed to operate safely during MRI scans, though specific precautions need to be taken. www.mrimypacemaker.com

CT/CAT, diagnostic X-ray or ultrasound are all safe.

Most dental procedures are also safe (drilling, ultrasound cleaning etc.).

There are certain procedures that may require reprogramming of your pacemaker; this will usually be arranged by the referrer.

Please speak to your pacemaker clinic or cardiologist if you are concerned.

Travelling with a Pacemaker fitted

It is safe to travel on aeroplanes after two weeks. Please ensure your travel insurance company know about your pacemaker and that your cover is appropriate.

Caution may be needed near security scanners in airports.

Portable wand devices can be safely used providing they are scanned briefly over the device area.

Additional information

Pacemaker battery life varies depending on model and how much they are being used. Regular checks by the pacemaker clinic ensure that the battery life is monitored and we will arrange for the generator to be changed, when the time comes.

Pacemakers go through testing before we are allowed to use them. Like all electronic equipment, unexpected faults may occur from time to time and these would be picked up by the pacemaker team.

If we receive warning of a problem with a particular model of pacemaker, we may need to see you more. If there were to be any problems that we felt put you at risk of harm, your cardiologist would talk to you about replacing the device early.

What happens when the generator is changed?

It is not usually necessary to change the leads that are connected to the heart. Therefore the generator change procedure is much quicker than the initial implant. The old generator is removed and exchanged for a new generator and then tested.

Useful contacts

Calderdale Cardiac Device Team - 01422 224310

Calderdale Day Case Procedure Unit - 01422 224524

For out of hours emergencies please contact:

CRH Coronary Care Unit - 01422 223108

Other useful numbers/websites:

DVLA driver's medical branch: Swansea Telephone: 0300 790 6801 Fax: 0300 123 0784

www.dft.gov.uk/dvla/contactus/drivers_enquiries.aspx

British Heart Foundation www.bhf.org.uk/information-support

Heart Rhythm Alliance

<https://api.heartrhythmalliance.org/files/download/0659ebac5f9f6cec286ccfb6c3c2f34d>

British Heart Rhythm Society

<https://bhrrs.com/explainer-animation-remote-monitoring/>

If you have any comments about this leaflet or the service you have received you can contact :

Cardiac Device Team

Telephone: 01422 224310

www.cht.nhs.uk

If you would like this information in another format or language contact the above.

Potřebujete-li tyto informace v jiném formátu nebo jazyce, obraťte se prosím na výše uvedené oddělení

Jeżeli są Państwo zainteresowani otrzymaniem tych informacji w innym formacie lub wersji językowej, prosimy skontaktować się z nami, korzystając z ww. danych kontaktowych

ਚ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਇਹ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਪ੍ਰਾਚੂਪ ਜਾਂ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿੱਚ ਲੈਣਾ ਚਾਹੁੰਦੇ ਹੋ,
ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਉਪਰੋਕਤ ਵਿਭਾਗ ਵਿੱਚ ਸਾਡੇ ਨਾਲ ਸੰਪਰਕ ਕਰੋ।

اگر آپ کو یہ معلومات کسی اور فارمیٹ یا زبان میں درکار ہوں، تو
برائے مہربانی مندرجہ بالا شعبے میں ہم سے رابطہ کریں۔

"إذا احتجت الحصول على هذه المعلومة بشكل مغاير أو مترجمة إلى لغة مختلفة فيرجى منك الاتصال بالقسم
المذكور أعلاه"