

# Your guide to living with a Cardiac Resynchronisation Therapy (CRT) device

## Information for patients

**The purpose of this information leaflet is to provide you with post implant information on your pacemaker implant**

### What is a Cardiac Resynchronisation Therapy (CRT)?

It is a specific type of cardiac device with a lead that sits around the back of your heart to help your heart pump more efficiently. Your pacemaker will provide a small electrical impulse down each lead to stimulate the heart to beat. The impulses are timed to create a more synchronous heart contraction than if we relied on your own heartbeat.

You will have a cardiac resynchronisation therapy pacemaker (CRTP) which acts as a pacemaker alone, or a cardiac resynchronisation therapy defibrillator (CRTD) which in addition to a pacemaker, has a defibrillator component which is able to deliver high energy therapy if you have a fast abnormal heart rhythm.

### Aftercare

Avoid vigorous shoulder movements on the cardiac device side for at least a few days. Gentle rotation of your shoulder is advised to prevent it from stiffening up. The area where the cardiac device is implanted can often be tender after the implant, but this should resolve.

You can remove the dressing seven days after your procedure. The wound is routinely closed with surgical stitches. You can shower, but the wound should not be soaked for at least 7 days. The stitches should gradually dissolve within 3 weeks.

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

If you are worried about your wound, please contact the Nursing team on 01422 224388 at CRH for advice.

## Follow-Up

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

Your cardiac device ID card will be posted out to you 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 also offer you a home monitor for your device; this monitor allows us to check your device from home and alerts us to important changes detected by your device.

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.

Frequency of follow-up is dependent on a variety of factors, which the Cardiac Physiology team will advise you on, but is routinely every 6-12 months.

The Cardiac Physiologist present will assess your symptoms, medications, and wellbeing. We will also utilise the appointments to assess the battery life of your device and optimise programmed settings to help improve symptoms.

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

Please bring an up to date list of your medications to any hospital appointment with us.

## Getting back to normal

### Everyday activities

Returning to everyday activities is an essential part of recovery. It is usual for patients to return to work approximately 1 week post-implant. If you do a very heavy or physical job we ask that you keep the movements of your shoulder on the device 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 device.
- You will need to complete a form to notify the DVLA.

### **Advice for patients with a CRT pacemaker (CRTP):**

- Patients with CRTPs, including after a generator change, are not allowed to drive a car (Group 1 licence) for 1 week post implant.
- Patients with CRTPs, including after generator changes are not allowed to drive a bus or lorry (Group 2 licence) for 6 weeks post implant.

### **Advice for patients with a CRT defibrillator (CRTD):**

- Patients with CRTDs fitted following an episode of arrhythmia cannot drive for six months post implant.
- Patients with CRTDs fitted for preventative reasons cannot drive for one month.
- Patients with CRTDs are permanently banned from holding a PSV or HGV license.
- Once your CRTD is fitted, if the device has to deliver therapy, other driving restrictions may apply.

As with many regulations, things change over time. The latest guidance can be found at [www.dvla.gov.uk](http://www.dvla.gov.uk). If you are unsure, please ask the team for advice. It is your responsibility to ensure that your car insurance company are aware that you have a device fitted.

### **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 30 cm 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 device fitted as some procedures require precautions.

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

[www.mrimypacemaker.com](http://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 cardiac devices clinic or Cardiologist if you are concerned.

## Travelling with a cardiac device

It is safe to travel on aeroplanes after two weeks. Please ensure your travel insurance company know about your device 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

Device 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 this to be changed, when the time comes.

Devices 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 cardiac devices team.

If we receive warning of a problem with a particular model of cardiac device, 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.

## Twitching

One of your pacemaker leads may sit close to a nerve, which is normal. This can occasionally provoke twitching / hiccupping in your stomach. Although this may feel uncomfortable and annoying, it is not dangerous. However, to improve your experience with your pacemaker we should see you in clinic to reprogram your device to stop this.

## What happens when the cardiac device 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 224018

Calderdale Day Case Procedure Unit - 01422 224388

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

[http://www.dft.gov.uk/dvla/contactus/drivers\\_enquiries.aspx](http://www.dft.gov.uk/dvla/contactus/drivers_enquiries.aspx)

British Heart Foundation [www.bhf.org.uk/informationsupport](http://www.bhf.org.uk/informationsupport)

Heart Rhythm Alliance

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

Explain my Procedure [www.explainmyprocedure.com/bhrs/](http://www.explainmyprocedure.com/bhrs/)

Pumping Marvellous patient charity <https://pumpingmarvellous.org>

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

Cardiac Device Team

Telephone: 01422 224018

[www.cht.nhs.uk](http://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"