



# Following a Subcutaneous Implantable Cardioverter - Defibrillator (S-ICD®) Implant

This information is for anyone who has had a Subcutaneous Implantable Cardioverter Defibrillator (also called S-ICD®) inserted.

A Subcutaneous ICD (S-ICD) is an Implantable Cardioverter Defibrillator which delivers lifesaving defibrillation therapy. This device has been inserted under your left armpit and the electrode is just under the skin. There are no electrical wires in or on your heart.

## Caring for yourself at home

### The day after implant

- Rest for the first 24 hours.
- Your wound may feel quite bruised and sore for the first day or two. It is important that you take analgesics (painkillers) as needed but you should not exceed the recommended daily dose

### During the first 2 weeks

- In general, you are free to move your arm but should try to avoid movements that could create pressure on the wound.
- It is not advisable to exercise in the first 2 weeks but you can resume normal activity in your home.
- **Do not** lift anything heavy. This means do not lift anything more than 5 kilograms or 10 pounds (a small suitcase, a bag of groceries).

### For the first 4-6 weeks

- Recovery time differs from patient to patient and will depend on how your wound is healing and whether or not you are taking oral anticoagulants.
- When your wounds have healed, you can move freely.
- Slowly build up your level of exercise.
- Avoid contact sports (e.g. rugby, judo).
- Discuss long-distance travel plans with your physician.
- Do not stop or change your medications without talking with your family doctor

## Caring for your wound

- Leave the bandage on for 2 days. Do not get the bandage wet.
- When you remove the bandages, you will see some thin bandage strips or staples over the incisions.
- If you have staples, please have your family doctor remove these 10 days after your procedure. Leave the bandage strips in place. Let them fall off on their own. It can take up to 2 weeks for the strips to fall off.
- If you have stitches, these should dissolve on their own.
- **Female patients** are reminded not to wear underwire bras due to the placement of the generator. Sports/athletic bras are recommended to prevent rubbing on the device.

**Do not** get your incision wet for 5 days.

- When you shower, do not use soap on the wound.
- Gently pat the wound dry. Do not rub it.
- Do not put any creams or ointments on the incision.

## Managing Pain

- If you are having pain, take plain acetaminophen (such as Tylenol or store brand). You can take 1 to 2 tablets, every 4 to 6 hours. Never take more than 4000 mg in any 24 hour period (no more than 12 tablets).
- Do not take ibuprofen (such as Motrin, Advil, or a store brand) for pain unless your doctor has said you can.

## Medications

Take your medications as directed.

If you are taking a blood thinner such as warfarin (Coumadin):

- start taking it on \_\_\_\_\_

Check with your family doctor when you must get your blood tested.

## Driving

For your own safety and the safety of others, you must follow the mandatory driving restrictions in the British Columbia Motor Vehicle Act.

The Act says that after a defibrillator implant, you are:

- You are **no longer** allowed to drive a **commercial vehicle** (class 1 to 4) **at any time**.
- You are **not** allowed to drive a **private vehicle** (class 5) **for the time checked off here by your doctor**

\_\_\_\_ 4 weeks after the defibrillator implant.

\_\_\_\_ 3 months from the date your dangerous heart rhythm was diagnosed. Before driving again, you must have the doctor's approval.

\_\_\_\_ 6 months from the date your dangerous heart rhythm caused you to feel unwell, faint, or lose consciousness. Before driving again, you have the doctor's approval.

**Talk to your heart doctor if you have questions about driving, especially if it relates to your work.**

## When to see your doctor(s)

Make an appointment to see your family doctor 10 days after your procedure. For a check-up and to remove the staples if you have any.

You will be notified for a follow-up appointment to see your Electrophysiology (ICD) Doctor.

Clinic: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_

**OR**

Specific Physician: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_

If you have not heard from them, please call at the number above.

**A Medical Alert Bracelet** should be worn at all times with the type of device implanted (i.e. S-ICD ® under Left arm)

## When to get Help

Call 9-1-1 if you notice any of the following:

- A shock from the defibrillator and you do not feel well afterwards
  - Inform BC ambulance that you have an S-ICD located under your left arm
- Trouble breathing or cannot catch your breath
- Pain in your chest and/or shoulder
- Blood soaking through your bandage
- Dizzy or confused
- Your heart feels like it is beating quickly or racing
- 2 or more shocks within a 24 hour period **or** if you pass out

**DO NOT DRIVE YOURSELF TO THE HOSPITAL**

## **CALL THE PACEMAKER CLINIC AND GO TO THE NEAREST EMERGENCY ROOM IF YOU HAVE:**

- Increased swelling, redness, or drainage at the incision site
- High-grade fever (38.5C/101.3F and over) for 24 hours or more
- Low-grade fever (37.5C-37.9C or 98.5F-101.2F) for more than 2 days
- Sudden dizziness or light-headedness
- Weakness or feel very tired for several days
- Difficulty breathing or chest pain

<b>Victoria Pacemaker Clinic</b> Royal Jubilee Hospital Clinic 2, Main Floor, D&T Building	1952 Bay Street Victoria, BC	<b>Tel:</b> 250.370.8670
<b>Kelowna Pacemaker Clinic</b> Kelowna General Hospital	2268 Pandosy Street Kelowna, BC	<b>Tel:</b> 250.862.4450