

Going Home After Your Cardiac Device Procedure



Patient Education

Going Home

You have had a cardiac device procedure. Here are some guidelines to keep you safe and comfortable. Please read this before going home.

You have had the following cardiac device procedure(s):

- Cardiac device implant –new device with new leads
- Generator change – new pacemaker/ICD unit with a fresh battery using the existing leads
- Lead revision – new lead or lead re-positioning

Follow-up Appointments and Device Checks

- Please see your **doctor or walk-in clinic in 1-2 weeks** to check your incision is healing well. You must call to arrange this appointment.
- Your device needs to be checked shortly after implant.
 - Your device has been checked on the day it was implanted.
 - Please come to your clinic to have your first device check:

Time: _____

Location: _____

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- **You will have a 6-week check** at your local Cardiac Device Clinic. You will hear from the clinic either by phone or mailed letter. If you have not heard within 6 weeks, please call the clinic. Phone numbers for your nearest clinic are listed at the end of this handout.
- **Future checks will occur every 6 to 12 months** and may be either in-clinic visits or checks through a bedside remote monitor.

Your Medicines

- Restart your regular medications *unless* your doctor has told you not to. Fill any new prescriptions and follow the directions given to you on your discharge instructions.
- If you are taking Warfarin (Coumadin) or any other type of anticoagulant (blood thinner) medications, take as directed by your physician on your cardiac discharge instructions.

Pain Management

Most people find the discomfort of the procedure can be managed with Tylenol and ice packs. However, if your pain is severe and not under control, please notify your nurse (while in hospital) or your local cardiac device clinic if it continues after you have left the hospital.

Driving

Do not drive for one week or until your doctor tells you it is safe. Your doctor can advise you on this.

Care of Your Incision

- Your incision will be covered with a light bandage. It can be removed 2 days after the procedure.
- If you have an inflatable pressure dressing on your incision, you will receive a separate handout with instructions for how to manage and remove it.
- Under the bandage, your incision may be covered with Steri-Strips (small tape-like bandages). If they do not come off on their own, you can peel them off after 7-10 days with clean fingers or clean tweezers.
- Your incision needs to be checked by a family doctor within 2 weeks after the procedure.
- Do not scratch, pick or remove any scabs from the incision.
- Do not use oils, creams, powders or lotions on your wound.
- It is normal for the incision to look slightly red and bruised and feel itchy or numb for about 2 weeks.
- **IF YOUR INCISION OPENS GO TO YOUR NEAREST EMERGENCY ROOM IMMEDIATELY. CALL THE PACEMAKER CLINIC AS WELL.**

Bathing

- You may shower 2 days after the procedure.
- No bath or hot tub until the incision is well healed.
- Pat the area dry with a clean towel. **Do not rub.**

Activity Guidelines

For 24 hours After Surgery

If you had your surgery under intravenous (IV) sedation you are considered impaired for 24 hours after surgery.

DO NOT:

- Make important decisions or sign documents;
- Work with machinery or do business;
- Travel alone by public transport (e.g. bus or taxi);
- Drink alcohol, take anti-anxiety pills or sleeping pills;
- Be responsible for the care of another person (e.g. baby, small child, or person in poor health).

For 6 Weeks (New Implants and Lead Revisions Only)

- **Do not push, pull, or raise your arm** nearest your device by more than 90 degrees to the front or side for 6 weeks (e.g. carrying heavy groceries or lifting objects above your head).
- **Do move your shoulder slowly and gently** to keep it mobile.
- **Do not lift items heavier than 10 pounds** with the arm nearest your device.
- **Do not bend down** to tie your shoes for 1 week
- **Do** put your arm nearest your device through your shirt sleeve first.

For 6 Weeks (All Procedures)

- Do not lie face down for the first two weeks.
- Avoid elective surgery for 6 weeks after your device is inserted.
- Arrange your seat belt for your comfort. A soft towel between the pacemaker and the seat belt for the first few weeks may be more comfortable.
- Pad bra straps on the device side for comfort.

Activities After 6 Weeks

You can resume all activities including sexual activity, as is comfortable for you, unless your physician has advised otherwise.

Ongoing Life With Your Device

- Avoid blows to the device site.
- Do not press, rub or massage your device.
- You will be given a temporary wallet card. This card has information about your pacemaker. **Carry your pacemaker/ device card with you at all times.** A permanent card may be mailed to you by the manufacturer in 1 to 6 months, if you signed the special consent.
- Consider wearing a medical alert bracelet with the type of your device plus where it is in your body. For example, "Pacemaker, right upper chest".
- Tell your dentist and physiotherapist that you have a cardiac device. Some treatments may affect how your device functions.

Contacting Your Cardiac Device Clinic

- When you have an in-clinic appointment, your device clinic will contact you by phone or a mailed letter with the date.
- Because of the high volume of patients, it is not possible to accommodate unscheduled or drop-in patients.
- If you have concerns between your scheduled appointments, contact the clinic by phone and leave a message. A clinician will return your call as soon as possible.

In the event of a medical emergency go to your nearest Emergency Department. Do not wait for advice from the Pacemaker/ICD clinic.

Victoria Royal Jubilee Hospital Clinic 2, D&T Building	1952 Bay Street Victoria, BC	Tel: 250.370.8670
Nanaimo Millstone Medical Building	202-1621 Dufferin Cres Nanaimo, BC	Tel: 250.739.5914
Campbell River Campbell River Hospital	375 - 2nd Avenue Campbell River, BC	Tel: 250.286.7156

Remote Monitoring

Most modern cardiac devices can be followed through a small unit that sits at your bedside. This lets your clinic check your device without requiring you to come to the clinic in person. It can also alert your clinic of potential problems. You will be given more information and assisted with setting this up when you get your device, or at your next clinic visit.

For More Information About Cardiac Devices

Island Health's [Cardiac Device Clinic](#) internet page has information about devices, including how to contact your clinic, frequently asked questions, and what to expect from your clinic visit.

For Non-Emergency Health Information and Services

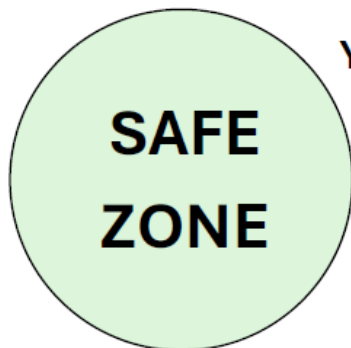
HealthLinkBC

Phone: 811 from anywhere in BC

Phone: 711 for deaf and hearing-impaired assistance (TTY)

Web: www.HealthLinkBC.ca

The information in this handout is intended only for the person it was given to by the health care team. It does not replace the advice or directions given to you by your doctor.

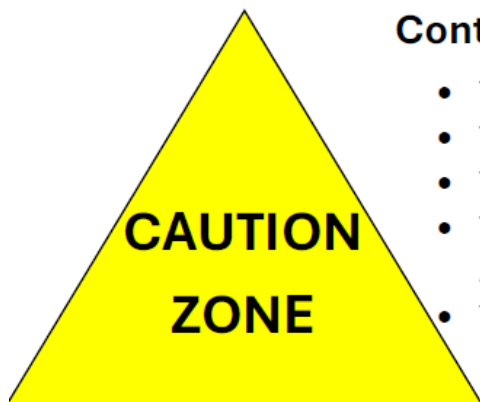


Your device is working appropriately if:

- You have normal levels of energy, whatever that is for you.
- You haven't fainted or lost consciousness.
- Your incision is well-healed.
- Your device clinic hasn't contacted you with concerns.

It is normal to have:

- a range of heart rates.
- some mild discomfort or itching at the incision site after implant.
- occasional palpitations or skipped beats, if you feel well otherwise.
- your smart watch report different heart rates than your pacemaker.



Contact your doctor and notify your clinic if:

- Your incision is red, swollen, oozing or extremely painful.
- You have a fever in the week after implant.
- You have new dizziness or lightheadedness.
- You have new shortness-of-breath or fatigue **but you are still able to do your daily activities.**
- You have uncomfortable hiccups.



Call 911 or go to your nearest emergency room (do not drive yourself) if:

- You have crushing chest pain.
- Your incision opens or parts of your device are visible.
- You faint or lose consciousness.
- You have new shortness-of-breath, lightheadedness or fatigue that is **severe and constant.**

Never allow anyone except a Cardiac Device physician or surgeon to insert a needle or scalpel near your device.