

Your guide to living with a pacemaker

Information for patients



Cardio-Respiratory
CSU

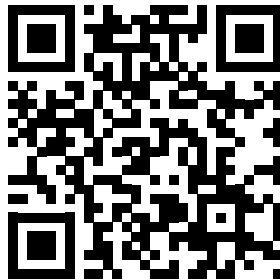
The purpose of this information leaflet is to provide you with post procedure and follow-up information, following your pacemaker implant.

What is a pacemaker?

A pacemaker is used to treat slow heart rhythms. Your pacemaker will provide a small electrical impulse to stimulate the heart to beat. The pacemaker monitors your heart rhythm; if it is too slow then the pacemaker will initiate a heartbeat.

The link or QR code below gives useful information on the follow up procedure for your implantable cardiac device

<https://youtu.be/jl9BiF5BA68>



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 five days after discharge.

The pacemaker wound is routinely closed with surgical glue or steri-strips.

You can shower, but the wound should not be soaked for at least seven days. The 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 pacemaker clinic at the LGI or Ward 14 for advice.

Follow-Up

We will arrange for you to attend St James University Hospital or Leeds General Infirmary, 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 provided at this check.

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 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.

Our department utilises a text messaging facility to inform patients of results and appointment schedules, if you wish to opt out of this, please inform a team member.

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

St James pacemaker clinic 0113 206 4759 (Monday-Friday 9:00am-4:30pm)

Leeds General Infirmary pacemaker clinic 0113 392 6389 (Monday-Friday 9-4.30pm)

LGI Ward Cardiology Day Case (L14) 0113 392 7414

For emergencies out of hours please contact:

LGI Coronary Care (L20) Ward number: 0113 392 7420

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/informationsupport

Heart Rhythm Alliance

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

British Heart Rhythm Society

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

What did you think of your care? Visit bit.ly/nhsleedsfft
Your views matter

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