

Permanent Pacemaker (PPM)

Care Instructions

Your permanent pacemaker is a sophisticated piece of electronic equipment and both the wound and pacemaker need special care during the recovery period and into the future. Please use this guide to help you on the road to recovery from your procedure. If you have any concerns or questions that are not covered in this guide, please call your cardiologist or electrophysiologist's office (usually the doctor who performed the procedure) to get the information you need.

Wound Care

- Keep the incision dry for 7 days. **Do not get the incision or bandage wet.** You may sponge bathe but may not shower for 7 days or until after your first follow up visit.
- Change the dressing daily. You may put Betadine, iodine or Bacitracin ointment over the incision and cover it with dry, sterile dressing to help fight infection while healing. Do not use any other type of ointments or solutions over your incision site
- You may have steri-strips or a special adhesive over the incision. Do not try to remove them. Allow them to come off by themselves
- If you have staples along the incision, your physician will remove them when you see him/her in clinic for your first follow-up visit.
- Do not apply lotions, powder or ointments to the incision.
- A bruise or mild swelling is expected and may take several weeks to heal.
- **Notify your physician if you observe an increase in swelling, drainage, bleeding after the first 2 days or if you develop a fever. (>101°F or 38°C)**

Activity

- Do not raise your arm above shoulder height or reach behind your back for 1-2 weeks. This may cause problems with the leads
- You may "walk" it up and down the wall using your fingers to maintain good mobility after the first 3 days.
- You may resume regular activities after your first follow-up visit unless your doctor gives you other instructions.
- No sudden, vigorous, pulling or chopping movement with your affected arm for 4 weeks. This includes most sports activities.
- Do not lift more than 10 lbs. with affected arm for 2 weeks. Do not lift more than 20 lbs. for the first month.
- You may resume driving after your follow-up appointment unless instructed differently by your doctor.
- Wear a sling **ONLY** if you need a reminder to limit activity.

Precautions

- You may use common household appliances if they are in good repair, **including a microwave oven**. You should not, however, lean against them while they are on
- When using cellular and cordless phones, keep at least 6 inches from the pacemaker; use on the opposite side from pacemaker or use an ear phone.
- Store cellular phones in a location opposite the side of the pacemaker even if not in use. Do not keep it in your shirt pocket.
- Keep power tools properly grounded. Chain saw use is not recommended.
- Do not hold or carry magnets near your pacemaker. This includes therapeutic magnets
- You may not perform electrical arc welding.
- Airport screening devices and theft detectors may alarm but normal movement through and away from the detectors should not harm the pacemaker. You may need to show your ID card and ask for a hand search. The hand held metal detector (wand) contains a magnet and should NOT be placed near the pacemaker.
- Medical Procedures — always tell any health professional that you have a pacemaker and show your ID card. If you are going to have surgery or electrocautery, your pacemaker may need to be reprogrammed.
- **Do not have a MRI (Magnetic Resonance Imaging Study) or Therapeutic Diathermy. If you are having radiation or lithotripsy, certain precautions need to be taken before the procedure.**
- Exposure to normal diagnostic x-ray, CT scan, and fluroscopy radiation will not affect your pacemaker.
- No routine dental work for 4-6 weeks, call your pacemaker physician before emergency dental work and notify the dentist that you have a new device.
- Sexual activity may be resumed when you feel ready.

Pacemaker ID Card and Patient Booklet

- You will be provided with a temporary ID card at time of discharge from hospital.
- The manufacturer will mail a permanent, plastic card in approximately 8 weeks.
- **It is extremely important that you carry your pacemaker ID card with you at all times!**
- You should purchase a medic alert bracelet identifying your pacemaker and pacemaker manufacturer.
- Please refer to the pacemaker booklet for further information on the pacemaker.

Follow-up Care

- You will be given your first follow-up appointment for a wound check in about 1 week. If you are unsure when the appointment is, please call your doctors office.
- You will need to follow-up in the Device Clinic in 4-6 weeks and will need continued follow-up for the rest of your life (about every 6-12 months)
- You will still need to see your pacemaker physician at least once a year.
- Your pacemaker battery will need to be changed about every 5-10 years. This will be arranged by your doctor when necessary