



# Going home after your Cardiac Device, Pacemaker Implant, or Pacemaker Lead Revision

You have had a cardiac device or pacemaker inserted, your leads revised or a generator changed. This handout will help you learn how to care for yourself at home, and what will be expected in the future. Please read this information before you go home.

You will be given a temporary **Pacemaker/ Device Card**. This card has information about your pacemaker. **Carry your Pacemaker/ Device Card with you at all times.** A permanent card will be mailed to you by the manufacturer in about 1 - 6 months, if you signed the special consent.

## Follow-up appointments

Please see your GP in one week or as directed (call to arrange this appointment)

Other \_\_\_\_\_

## Pacemaker Clinic

Following the implant of your device you will be seen in the pacemaker clinic in 1-3 days. At that time, you will be advised regarding further follow up appointments. It is generally expected that once the healing occurs you will be seen every 6-12 months. If you have concerns between your scheduled appointments, you can contact the clinic by phone and they will schedule an extra appointment. Because of the high volume of bookings, it may be difficult to accommodate unscheduled or drop in patients.

Your 1<sup>st</sup> Clinic Appointment will be \_\_\_\_\_

\*You will hear from the clinic either by phone or addressed letter. If you have not heard within 6 weeks, please call the clinic to enquire.

**IF YOUR INCISION OPENS PLEASE CALL THE PACEMAKER CLINIC AND GO TO YOUR NEAREST EMERGENCY ROOM IMMEDIATELY. NEVER LET ANYONE PUT A NEEDLE INTO THE AREA NEAR THE DEVICE OR TAMPER WITH THE DEVICE POCKET UNLESS DIRECTED TO DO SO BY YOUR CARDIOLOGIST!**

## Pacemaker Clinics

### Vancouver Island

<b>Victoria</b> Royal Jubilee Hospital Clinic 2, Main Floor, D&T Building	1952 Bay Street Victoria, BC	<b>Tel:</b> 250.370.8670
<b>Nanaimo</b> Nanaimo General Hospital	1200 Dufferin Crescent Nanaimo, BC	<b>Tel:</b> 250.739.5914
<b>Campbell River</b> Campbell River General Hospital	375 - 2nd Avenue Campbell River, BC	<b>Tel:</b> 250.286.7156

### Interior British Columbia

<b>Kamloops</b> Royal Inland Hospital	311 Columbia Street Kamloops, BC	<b>Tel:</b> 250.314.2100 ext.3087
<b>Kelowna</b> Kelowna General Hospital	2268 Pandosy Street Kelowna, BC	<b>Tel:</b> 250.862.4450
<b>Penticton</b> Penticton Regional Hospital	550 Carmi Avenue Penticton, BC	<b>Tel:</b> 250.492.4000 ext.2562
<b>Shuswap</b> Shuswap Lake General Hospital	601-10 <sup>th</sup> Street NE Salmon Arm, BC	<b>Tel:</b> 250.833.3636 ext.2361
<b>Trail</b> Kootenay Boundary Regional Hospital	1200 Hospital Bench Trail, BC	<b>Tel:</b> 250.368.3311 ext.2350
<b>Vernon</b> Vernon Jubilee Hospital	2101 32 <sup>nd</sup> Street Vernon, BC	<b>Tel:</b> 250.558.1200

## Care of your incision

- Your incision will be covered with a light bandage. It can be removed 2 days after the procedure
- Under the bandage, your incision may be covered with Steri-Strips (small tape-like bandages). If they do not peel off on their own, you can peel them off after 7-10 days
- Your incision needs to be assessed by your family doctor 7 days 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**

## **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
- Prolonged hiccupping
- Difficulty breathing or chest pain

## **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**

If you had your surgery under intravenous (IV) sedation you are considered impaired for 24 hours after surgery, so you should plan not to:

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

## **Do**

- Arrange the seat belt for your comfort. A soft towel between the pacemaker and the seat belt for the first few weeks may be more comfortable
- Put the device-side arm through shirtsleeve first
- Avoid direct blows to the device site
- Pad bra straps on the device side for comfort
- Ask your Cardiologist/specialist or Pacemaker Clinic Nurse when you can start activities such as gardening, swimming, cycling, sports, sex, and returning to work
- **Keep your pacemaker/ device card with you at all times**

- Store and use your cell phones and personal music players **on opposite side of your pacemaker**. These items can emit a signal when turned on or on standby and that can interfere with your pacemaker
- Tell your dentist and physiotherapist that you have a pacemaker/cardiac device. Some treatments may affect how your device functions
- **Before entering airport security**, tell them you have a device and ask for a hand search. Wearing a button front or V-neck shirt can help. If the security person uses a wand, it **must not** be held right over the implant
- A **Medical Alert Bracelet** should be worn at all times with the type of device implanted. (i.e. ICD, Pacemaker, BiV ICD, plus location)

### Do not

- Lie face down, press on your device, or massage/ rub/ twiddle with, it in any way.
- Push, pull, or raise the incision-side arm more than 90 degrees to the front or side for 6 weeks (e.g. carrying heavy groceries or lifting objects above your head)
- **Drive until your doctor tells you it is safe**. Your doctor will advise you on this
- Bend down to tie your shoes for 1 week

### Your Medications

- Restart your regular medications unless your doctor has told you not to. Fill any new prescriptions and follow directions
- 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/Medication Prescription sheet given to you at discharge.

### What to do if you have a shock from your ICD

- If you have a shock but feel well, sit quietly for 2 minutes and notify the Pacemaker Clinic as soon as possible.
- If you have one or more shocks and feel unwell, call 911 right away.

### Loop Recorder Patients

A Loop Recorder is an implantable device which record heart rhythms. Your Loop Recorder may stay in place for up to 3 years. The nurse will give you a booklet about your Loop Recorder

- Always keep the Patient Assistant (a small hand-held activator) with you. Use the Patient Assistant immediately after a fainting spell or other symptoms such as heart palpitations by placing it over your loop recorder site and pressing the button.

**Every time you use the Patient Assistant please contact your nearest Pacemaker clinic**