

Pacemaker

A pacemaker is a device that sends electrical signals (impulses) to the upper and lower parts of your heart. This helps keep a safe heart rate (pulse). A pacemaker has two parts, a battery (generator) and the lead(s). Leads are wires that connect the generator to your heart tissue.

Traditional Pacemaker

This is a traditional pacemaker that is placed under your skin just below the collarbone. The lead(s) go inside of your heart. The number of leads can vary. You may have a:

- 1 lead (Single chamber pacemaker)
- 2 leads (Dual chamber pacemaker)
- 3 leads (Cardiac resynchronization therapy, also called CRT-P)

The Day Before Surgery

A nurse will call you the day before surgery (or the Friday before a Monday surgery). The nurse will review your instructions and tell you what time to arrive. If you do not hear from us by 4 pm, please call **608-263-1530**.

If you feel sick or have a fever over 100°F the day before surgery, call the clinic.

The Day of Surgery

Before the procedure starts blood may be drawn for labs. You will have an IV placed in your hand or arm. If needed, a small area around the surgical sites will be shaved. Your skin will be cleaned with a special soap. You may receive antibiotics through your IV to help prevent infection.

You will receive medicine to make you comfortable. Your skin will be numbed around the incision site.

Sterile drapes will cover you from your neck to your feet so that only the surgical site is exposed.

The Procedure

The vein below your collarbone is used because it travels to your heart. A small “pocket” is made under your skin for the new device generator and lead(s) to sit in. The leads are then threaded through the blood vessel into the heart, using x-ray for guidance. Once the lead(s) is/are in the right place, they are secured. Then, the lead(s) is/are connected to the generator (which contains the battery). The site is closed with dissolvable sutures or surgical glue. The whole process takes about 1-3 hours.

Going Home

You may go home the same day or stay in the hospital overnight. Your device will be checked before you leave and you may have an x-ray. We will review discharge instructions with you.

You cannot drive yourself home. You need to arrange for someone to drive you home. You can resume driving after 1 week.

Restrictions

When a device is first put in or there are new leads added, you will have restrictions. This allows the device/leads to fully heal in the heart. The restrictions help make sure the device does not dislodge and the leads do not move as healing occurs. Some restrictions vary by person based on the reason you received the device. The most common guidelines are:

- **Do not** swim, golf, play tennis, or any other contact sports for 3 months.
- Avoid dental work for 1 month.

For **6 weeks** after surgery:

- **Do not** raise your arm over your head on the side of your device.
- **Do not** reach behind you on the side of your device.
- **Do not** lift more than 10 pounds (i.e. a gallon of milk) with the arm on the side of your device.
- You may want to wear your arm in a sling when you sleep for the first 1-2 weeks. This will help prevent involuntary motions while you sleep.

Incision Care

It is important that you take care of your incision site to prevent an infection.

- Keep the site clean and dry.
- **Do not** use any lotions or ointments on the incision.
- **Do not** scratch or rub the site.
- **Do not** soak in a bathtub, hot tub, or go into a pool, lake or river until your incision is completely healed.
- Leave the current bandage on for 72 hours.
- **Do not** shower for _____ days.
- Your incision may have clear glue or or small pieces of adhesive tape called “steri-strips” under the bandage. If there are steri-strips in place, leave them until they fall off on their own. The nurse may also remove them at your follow-up visit.
- When you do shower, let the soap and water run down the incision and gently pat dry.

Infection

Look at the site daily for signs of infection:

- Redness
- Swelling
- Fever (101°F or higher)
- Drainage
- Tenderness
- Warm to touch

Pain

You may take a mild pain reliever such as acetaminophen (Tylenol®) or ibuprofen (Motrin®) for any pain. You may also apply an ice pack. Ibuprofen or other NSAID medicines increase your risk of bleeding. You may want to avoid them if you are taking a blood thinner.

Device ID Card

You will receive a temporary ID card and will receive your permanent card in about 2 months. **Carry your card with you all the time.** Tell your health and dental care providers that you have a permanent cardiac device.

Electrical Hazards

You will need to avoid certain types of electrical devices. For more information, call your device company.

Avoid

- Working under the hood of a running car
- Arc welding

Cautions

- **Therapeutic radiation machines.**
- **Electrocautery:** Discuss with your physician if you will need electrocautery for a procedure in the operating room or the dentist’s office.
- **Cell phones:** Keep cell phones at least 6 inches from your device. Place the phone on the ear opposite of your device or use a headset.
- **Theft detection devices:** These are often around the entrances of stores. Walk through them as you normally would. Do not linger near these.
- **Airport security:** Tell security staff you have a device. Show them your Medical Device ID card.

- **Magnets:** Magnetic snap closure (in jackets), magnetic name badges, and any equipment with a magnetic strip. Keep anything with a magnet 6-8 inches from your device.
- **MRI (magnetic resonance imaging).** Discuss with your physician before having an MRI.

Safe Devices

- Microwaves
- Hair dryers
- Electric blankets and heating pads
- Computers
- Radios, TVs, and stereos

Follow-up Visit

Location: _____

Date: _____ Time: _____

After your first visit, your device will be checked every 3-4 months either in clinic or with home remote checks.

When to Call:

- If you feel lightheaded, pass out or if your symptoms return that you had before your device.
- You have any signs of infection.

Who to Call:

UW Heart and Vascular Clinic.

Monday – Friday, 8:00 am- 4:30 pm

608-263-1530 or 1-800-323-8942

After hours, nights, weekend, and holidays this number will give you the paging operator. Ask for the cardiology fellow on call. Give your full name and phone number with the area code. The doctor will call you back.

For questions about your device, call the device company:

- Medtronic: 1-800-633-8766
- Boston Scientific: 1-800-227-3422
- St. Jude/Abbott: 1-800-722-3423
- Biotronik: 1-800-547-0394

If you are a patient receiving care at UnityPoint – Meriter, Swedish American or a health system outside of UW Health, please use the phone numbers provided in your discharge instructions for any questions or concerns.

Your health care team may have given you this information as part of your care. If so, please use it and call if you have any questions. If this information was not given to you as part of your care, please check with your doctor. This is not medical advice. This is not to be used for diagnosis or treatment of any medical condition. Because each person's health needs are different, you should talk with your doctor or others on your health care team when using this information. If you have an emergency, please call 911. Copyright ©4/2021 University of Wisconsin Hospitals and Clinics Authority. All rights reserved. Produced by the Department of Nursing HF#5094.