

Wearable Cardioverter Defibrillator (WCD)

A **wearable cardioverter defibrillator** (WCD), sometimes called a LifeVest®, is a vest-like device. This is worn to protect you if you are at risk of dangerous or life-threatening heart rhythms. Sometimes these abnormal heart rhythms - ventricular tachycardia (VT) and ventricular fibrillation (VF) happen without warning or any symptoms. These abnormal rhythms can lead to sudden cardiac death (SCD).

This vest has been ordered for you to wear by your Cardiology or Electrophysiology (EP) team. This allows your team to monitor and review your heart rhythm over time. It will help your team figure out your long-term risk of having a dangerous, life-threatening heart rhythm.

How to Use

Before going home, your team and a representative from the company will go over instructions. They will run through details of the WCD. Your team will also decide how long you should wear the WCD.

- You will get fit with a WCD. You should **always wear the vest**. Even wear it when you sleep. Only remove it for short periods of time when bathing, or when advised by your heart team. Please have someone home when you bathe.
- The light-weight vest is worn underneath clothing. It sits directly against your bare skin and has a flexible belt and shoulder straps.
- Patches and pads (or electrodes) in the vest monitor your heart rhythm at all times and provide treatment should you have an abnormal heart rhythm.
- You will have a monitor with a strap. This can be worn either around the waist or over the shoulder.
- The WCD provides continuous protection whether you are alone or with others.
- Be sure to check your monitor if you hear any alerts.
- Your vest will alert you and any bystanders if an abnormal heart rhythm is detected, the vest will start its sequence of treatment alerts. **Only you should operate the vest.**
 - If you are awake and an alert happens, you will feel vibrations from the vest, followed by an audible alarm and then voice prompts. You can hold down the “response buttons” which will delay treatment.
 - If you pass out or are unconscious, the vest will go through the same sequence as above. It will vibrate, go through a series of audible alarms, and then voice prompts. It will **automatically** deliver treatment and will also provide voice prompts to any bystanders telling them not to interfere or touch the patient.
- If the device delivers treatment, you may notice gel around the treatment pads on your chest and back. Call your heart team and **do not remove the vest**.

When to Call

- If you receive therapy from your WCD.
- If you have a fainting spell or pass out.

Emergency Care

Call 911 if:

- A bystander should **call 911** if you pass out and do not wake up.
- You do not feel well after your WCD has delivered therapy. **Do not** drive yourself to be evaluated.

Who to Call

You may contact your provider through MyChart or call your provider listed in your After Visit Summary or After Hospital Care Plan. For a list of UW Health Clinics, please visit www.uwhealth.org/.

UW Heart and Vascular Clinic
(608) 915-0200

Monday – Friday, 8:00 am – 4:30 pm

After clinic hours, nights, weekends, and holidays your call will go to our after hours answer service.

Care of the WCD

- Keep the battery you aren't using in the charger.
- Change the battery in the WCD each day to make sure the WCD is always able to monitor your heart rhythm.
- Download the device once per week. Refer to the user manual for how to do this.
- **Do not** submerge the WCD under water or get it wet.

More Information

Your LifeVest® is made by Zoll®. You can find more information in your Patient Manual or on the website <http://www.lifevest.zoll.com>.

To contact Zoll LifeVest with questions about your WCD, or to reach the 24/7 customer service and technical support call **1-800-543-3267***.

*Please note, this is **not** a UW Health phone number and is not answered by UW Health staff.

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 © 6/2024 University of Wisconsin Hospitals and Clinics Authority. All rights reserved. Produced by the Department of Cardiology. HF#8032