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Information for Patients and Families

Implantable Loop Recorders



A device that records heart rhythms

This leaflet has been written to provide information about a device that can be put in your chest to record heart rhythms (Implantable Loop Recorder). We hope it answers some of the questions or concerns you may have about the procedure. It is not intended to replace talking with medical or nursing staff.

What is a Implantable Loop Recorder?

An Implantable Loop Recorder is a small monitor that can be put in your chest to record heart rhythms.

Why do I need a Implantable Loop Recorder?

You may have been experiencing blackouts, fainting episodes or dizziness of an unknown cause. An Implantable Loop Recorder is not a treatment for these symptoms but it can record your heart rhythm during these episodes to determine if there is an underlying cardiac problem.

How is the device implanted?

You will be awake during the procedure but you will be given a local anaesthetic to numb the skin. A small cut is made and the device is placed just under your skin. The wound is closed using a special type of glue.

Will I have any pain during the procedure?

Once the skin is numbed using local anaesthetic it should not be painful.

How long does it take to implant the device?

It usually takes about 10 minutes to implant the device. It does involve being admitted to hospital, normally as a day case.

What are the benefits of having a Implantable Loop Recorder?

It is possible that blackouts and fainting may be a result of an underlying cardiac problem. An Implantable Loop Recorder may have been recommended if other tests have not been able to identify a cause. Although it is not a treatment for these

symptoms it will allow your doctor to examine the information stored in the device if you experience further episodes. Your doctor may then be able to identify or rule out any cardiac problems.

What alternatives do I have?

Other tests include ECGs or Holter tests. ECGs and Holter tests both involve recording heart rhythms over a short period of time. You may not however experience symptoms during this time.

Your doctor would be happy to discuss any alternative tests if they are applicable to you.

What are the risks involved?

The procedure is usually very safe and is performed regularly in this hospital.

There is a small risk of bleeding and infection to the wound site.

Any risks involved with the procedure will be discussed with you in more detail before you sign a consent form.

What can I expect after the procedure?

You will be issued with a monitor to transmit your data and taught how to use it.

You will usually be able to go home 1 hour after the procedure.

When can I resume normal activities?

You will be given advice on how to care for your wound after you leave hospital and what to do if you notice any redness, swelling or discharge. This advice will be discussed in more detail before you go home and you will be given a discharge advice sheet.

How long does the device stay in?

The device is designed so that it can remain in your chest for up to 3 years if necessary. You will be informed how to activate the device if you experience any symptoms.

Your doctor can examine any information recorded by the device and determine if you require treatment. If treatment is required any treatment options will be discussed with you.