

Electrophysiology Studies and Ablation (EPS)

Discharge information

**If you require this in LARGER PRINT
Please inform a member of staff.**

This leaflet has been written to provide you with advice following Electrophysiology studies and ablation (EPS). We hope it answers some of the questions or concerns you may have. It is not intended to replace talking with medical or nursing staff.

Going home

Most people go home later the same day, or sometimes the day after the procedure. If you go home the same day, you should rest for the remainder of the day and limit the number of times you use the stairs.

Driving

You will not be able to drive for 2 days after which you can start to drive again provided there is no other disqualifying condition.

If you drive a vehicle for which you need a special licence (LGV and PCV) you will need to inform the DVLA that you have had the procedure. Usually you will not be able to drive for at least 6 weeks. You can find more information about this at the DVLA website (www.dvla.gov.uk) or call 0300 790 6806.

Pain relief

Most people do not have any pain or discomfort following the procedure. If however you feel any discomfort from the puncture site, you may find that taking simple painkillers such as paracetamol regularly will help. You must be careful not to exceed the recommended dose as stated on the box. Occasionally patients get pain from inflammation of the lining of the heart after the ablation. Usually it is mild and can be treated with painkillers, but if

it is more severe, please contact the Heart Rhythm Specialist nurse, on the number at the end of this leaflet.

Looking after the puncture site

You may have a shower the day after the procedure. If you prefer to have a bath you should wait 1-2 days. Take care when washing and drying the puncture site.

You should check the puncture site daily for the first few days after you get home. You may experience some bruising although there should not be any swelling.

It would be unusual for bleeding to occur once you are at home. If this happens you should lie down and apply firm pressure just over the puncture site for 15 minutes. If the bleeding does not stop after this time or you have any numbness, pain or swelling you should contact your GP, NHS direct or local Accident and Emergency department.

Approximately 1 week after the procedure you may notice a hard pea sized lump develop at the puncture site. This is quite common and it will eventually disappear.

Heart rhythm following the procedure

It is quite common to have an increased awareness of your heartbeat and to notice extra or 'missed beats' following the ablation. These feelings normally settle within a week or two of the procedure. If however you have the same symptoms of heart racing that you experienced prior to the procedure you should attend your local Accident and Emergency department for an ECG (heart tracing).

Resuming normal activities

You may have been given sedation during the procedure. Although you may not be aware of it, sedation can remain in your system for up to 24 hours and can cause you to be less alert than normal. It is important that you do not drive, drink alcohol, operate machinery or sign legally binding documents within 24 hours of the procedure. If you are discharged within 24 hours of the procedure it would be advisable to be escorted home and have someone stay with you overnight.

You should arrange to take approximately 1 week off work, although this varies depending upon the type of job you do. Your cardiologist will advise you if you require longer. You should avoid lifting heavy objects for 1 week.

Exercise and physical activity

Resuming to your normal levels of exercise should be a gradual approach. You can start to resume your normal exercise activities within a week of discharge and build up these activities when you feel ready.

Holidays

Generally unless there is a particular reason to go on holiday immediately after the procedure, we advise you should avoid going on holiday for 1 – 2 months, just in case your recovery is delayed, the procedure is not successful or complications occur.

Medication

Your consultant may have made changes or additions to any medication that you may be on following the procedure. If so, you will be given a 14 day supply of medication to take home with you. A nurse will discuss your medication with you before you go home. Details of your prescribed medication will be sent to you GP and it is important that you order further supplies before you run out. **It is very important that you continue to take all of the medication as prescribed.**

What happens next?

If you have any queries please contact the heart rhythm nurse specialists on the number at the end of this leaflet.

You will be reviewed as an outpatient approximately 3-4 months after the procedure. You may have been given the date of the follow up appointment before going home. Alternatively you will be contacted by letter and informed of the date, time and place to attend. If this appointment is not convenient, please contact your consultant's secretary. Please note however, you may not be seen by your consultant at this visit, but by another member of the medical team who can discuss your care with your consultant if required.

Healthy living advice

As a health promoting hospital we encourage you to read the following information on healthy living. Even if you are fit and healthy, following this advice could help to ensure you stay that way in the future.

Smoking – Smoking is bad for your health and increases the risk of heart attacks, strokes and lung conditions. Within 24 hours of stopping carbon monoxide is eliminated from the body, the lungs start to clear out the build up of tar and taste and smell is greatly improved. Within 2 – 12 weeks

circulation improves and the lungs have room for up to 10% more oxygen. If you would like help to stop smoking contact our smoking cessation advisor on **0151 600 1455** or speak to your GP.

Healthy eating and weight – Following a sensible low fat eating plan and eating the recommended daily intake of five portions of fruit and vegetables per day can help you to remain healthy and stay at a sensible weight. Keeping close to the recommended weight for your height can help to control your blood pressure and reduce the amount of work your heart has to do. Eating a low fat diet will help to control your cholesterol which is a fatty substance that can build up in your arteries and cause them to narrow.

Exercise and physical activity –Exercise can help to reduce blood pressure and cholesterol and help to maintain a healthy weight. (Please refer to the advice given about resuming activity after your stay in hospital before beginning exercise)

Alcohol intake – it is recommended that alcohol intake should not exceed 21 units a week for men and 14 for women.

1 pint = 2 units

1 short (pub measure) = 1 unit

1 small glass of wine = 1 unit

Please note;

You should avoid alcohol whilst taking painkillers as it increases the potency of the drug. You should limit the amount whilst taking warfarin as it increases sensitivity and will disrupt your clotting factor, which may affect the dosage you receive. Your doctor would be happy to discuss this further.

If you feel your alcohol intake is too high, or you would like help please contact your GP.

Stress – Stress can have a negative impact on health, affecting us both physically and mentally. Although it is not always possible to remove stress from our lives, there are many methods which can be used to aid relaxation, relieve stress and promote a positive healthy recovery including:

- **Finding ways to relax** - it is important to unwind. Each person has their own way of relaxing including deep breathing, listening to music or reading a book. Make some time for yourself
- **Eating right** - eating a sensible low fat diet can give you energy, aid wound healing and promote well being
- **Sleeping** - getting enough sleep is an important part of your recovery

- **Get moving** - Your body makes certain chemicals called endorphins during exercise. They can help to relieve stress and improve your mood.
- **Talk to friends or get help from a professional** - talking to friends can help you work through your problems or concerns. For more serious stress related disorders it may be helpful to talk to a health care professional. Speak to your GP for more information.

It is not uncommon to feel a bit low following discharge from hospital. These feelings usually resolve as you recover

Blood pressure – High blood pressure can increase the risk of heart attacks and strokes. If you have high blood pressure it is important to have it checked regularly and continue with any medication you may be on to control it. Avoiding salt in your food can help to control blood pressure too.

Who do I contact if I have any problems after I go home?

Please contact the Heart Rhythm Nurse Specialist Monday to Friday between the hours of 9am – 5pm on **0151 600 1270**

Or email

HeartRhythmNurseSpecialists@lhch.nhs.uk

Alternatively you can bleep the specialist nurses if you call the main switchboard on 0151 228 1616 and ask the operator to bleep the Heart Rhythm Nurses.

For help out of these hours please contact your GP if you are in need of immediate help – for example are having chest pain, breathlessness, palpitations, dizziness, please contact you GP for assessment or go to your nearest A&E department.

In the event of an emergency you should call 999 and attend your local Accident and Emergency department.

Please contact your consultant's secretary with any appointment queries.

For further information visit;

www.lhch.nhs.uk

www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk

www.bhf.org.uk

www.arrhythmiaalliance.org.uk

Or contact:

The British Heart Foundation information line on 0845 070 80 70

NHS Smoking Helpline – 0800 022 4332

If you require a copy of this leaflet in any other language or format please contact us quoting the name of the discharge information and the language you require.

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