

## **Discharge advice following Pacemaker Insertion**

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

This leaflet has been written to provide you with advice following insertion of a Pacemaker. 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**

You may 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. You will have been given a pacemaker registration card to take home with you. You should carry this card with you and show it to any medical professionals that are treating you.

### **Driving**

You must inform the Driving and Vehicle licensing agency (DVLA) that you have a Pacemaker. You will not be able to drive for 1 week after the procedure after which you can start driving again provided there is no other disqualifying condition.

If you have a large goods licence (LGV/PCV) 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](http://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 Pacemaker 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.

## Looking after your wound

Your wound will have been checked by a nurse prior to going home.

You should follow these general instructions when caring for your wound when you get home;

Your wound may have been closed using dissolvable stitches or a special type of glue or in some cases you may have stitches that require removing. **This will be confirmed by a nurse before you leave the ward.**

If you have stitches that need removing arrangements will be made for you to attend a community treatment room or a community nurse may visit you at home.

If there is a dressing on your wound you should remove it the next day and leave the wound exposed, providing that it is clean and dry. Always wash your hands before caring for your wound.

You may have a bath or a shower although you should avoid using soap or a flannel, which may harbour infection. Gently pat the area dry using a clean towel. Talc, deodorant and perfume should not be used near to the wound.

It is common to experience bruising, tenderness and slight discomfort on movement.

You should check the wound regularly to look for signs of infection. Signs of infection include;

- Redness around the wound area
- Heat or swelling around the wound
- Excessive tenderness
- Discharge or irritation from the wound
- Opening of the wound

If you experience any of these symptoms or are unsure in any way please call the Arrhythmia nurse specialist on the number at the end of this leaflet for advice. Outside of office hours you should contact your GP.

## Resuming normal activities

Sometimes sedation is used 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. If you have had sedation 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 may resume normal activities the day after you go home although you should not lift heavy objects and avoid lifting your arm above your head on the side of the implant for 2 weeks.

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.

### **Holidays**

Having a pacemaker should not prevent you from travelling abroad once you have recovered from the procedure. We recommend however that you do not travel until you have attended your follow up appointment at the pacemaker clinic (approximately 6 weeks after the procedure). You must inform your health insurer that you have a pacemaker. You should also remember to take your pacemaker registration card with you when you go on holiday.

### **Electrical Interference**

Certain types of equipment such as metal detectors used in airports, some anti – theft devices and certain types of scanners used in hospitals can produce electrical interference which could affect your pacemaker, although they are usually well shielded to help protect them. Walking through screening equipment at airports will activate alarms and temporarily affect your pacemaker, although it will return to normal as soon as you have passed through the equipment. You should inform airport staff that you have a pacemaker and show them your registration card. Microwaves and other household equipment will not affect your pacemaker unless they are not working properly.

### **Mobile phones**

We recommend that you do not keep a mobile phone in a pocket very close to your pacemaker, as there is a small risk of it causing interference. If you are using a mobile phone you should use it on the side away from the pacemaker. You will not be affected by someone else using a mobile phone in the same room.

### **Sports and physical activities**

You may resume sports and physical activities when you have recovered from the procedure, which is usually between 2 – 4 weeks. You should however avoid heavy contact sports, which may damage your pacemaker.

### **Medication**

Your consultant may have made changes or additions to your medication following the procedure. On the day that you are discharged 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?**

It is very important that you attend a pacemaker clinic for regular follow up appointments. You may have been given the date of your follow up appointment before going home. Alternatively you will be contacted by letter informing you of the date, time and place to attend. If this date is not convenient please contact the clinic using the number provided on the letter or appointment card.

### **Health Promotion**

Your stay in hospital might give you an opportunity to think about making changes to your lifestyle to improve your health for the future and to promote a healthy recovery. Following the advice below can help to prevent illness and may prevent any existing illness from becoming any worse.

**Smoking – If you smoke, now is the time to stop.** Stopping smoking is the single most effective step you can take to help yourself. From the moment you stop smoking the risk of a heart attack is reduced and is halved after 1 year of stopping. 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?**

Between the hours of 9am – 5pm contact;

Arrhythmia nurse specialist on;  
0151 600 1270 or 0151 600 1336

ECG department on;  
0151 600 1785

For advice outside of these hours contact your GP.

### **Discharge Advice Line – 0151 600 1056**

The discharge advice line is available for patients, relatives and carers for information and advice following discharge, from a member of the nursing team here at the Liverpool Heart and Chest Hospital.

The advice line offers information on recovery after discharge from hospital. Some examples of the type of advice we can offer are: recovery following operations and procedures, mobility and activity, wound care and medication advice. We can also provide information on smoking cessation, healthy eating, alcohol intake and relaxation. Please call the advice line and leave your name and a telephone number, and we will call you back as soon as we can, we aim to return all calls the same or next day. Please note that calls will not be returned after 4pm or at the week-ends. 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.

For further information visit;

[www.lhch.nhs.uk](http://www.lhch.nhs.uk)

[www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk](http://www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk)

[www.bhf.org.uk](http://www.bhf.org.uk)

[www.dipex.org](http://www.dipex.org)

Or contact:

The British Heart Foundation information line on 0845 070 80 70

If you require a copy of this leaflet in any other language or format please contact us on 0151 600 1257 quoting the leaflet code and the language you require.