

Cardiac Implantable Electronic Devices

A Guide to Post Implant Care



THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS

**MDAnderson
Cancer Center**

Making Cancer History®

Contact Information

The Cardiac Device Clinic is open Monday through Friday from 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. We are closed on weekends and holidays.

Cardiac Device Clinic direct number: 713-563-1284

Messages can be left at: 713-563-9870

Scheduling: 713-792-4015

Fax: 713-563-1830

Email: PacemakerCheck@MDAnderson.org

Call the Cardiac Device Clinic if:

- You have device-related questions
- You have symptoms like the ones before receiving your device
- You hear or feel an alert from your device
- You get a shock from your implantable cardioverter defibrillator

In case of a medical emergency, call 911 or go to the nearest hospital emergency center **right away**. Tell the care team you have a cardiac device and show your implant ID card. It is helpful to know the type and manufacturer of your device.

A cardiologist is on call 24 hours a day, 7 days a week for urgent questions. Call the MD Anderson operator at 713-792-2121 to speak to the doctor on call.

Wound Care Following Implant

After you have your device implanted, it is important to follow these instructions:

- Keep the incision dry.
- Your care team will let you know when you can shower.
- Once approved to shower, cover the incision site with plastic and secure with tape to keep the incision dry.
- **Do not** scrub over the incision site for 1 month.
- **Do not** use cream, powder or lotion over the incision for 1 month.
- Leave the Steri-Strips™ in place. They will fall off on their own or the doctor will remove them during your follow-up visit in 1 to 2 weeks.
- Bruising or mild swelling is normal and may take several weeks to go away.
- After the incision has healed, you do not have to cover it when showering.
- Pat the incision dry after you shower.

Physical Activity Limitations

As a precaution, you should limit your activities for the first month after implant.

- **Do not** lift anything more than 10 pounds with the arm on the side of the implant for 1 month.
- **Do not** raise the arm on the side of the implant above the level of your shoulder for 1 month.
- **Do not** push or pull yourself out of bed or a chair using the arm on the side of the implant for 1 month.
- **Do not** drive a car for 2 weeks.
- Talk with your doctor about when you can resume your normal activities.
- Talk with your doctor if you have any questions or concerns about your physical activities.

When to Call Your Doctor

Call your doctor if you have any of these symptoms:

- Drainage, bleeding, redness, swelling or warmth at the incision site
- Increased tenderness or bruising over the site
- Fever of 101°F (38.3°C) or higher
- Chest pain, constant discomfort, palpitations or shortness of breath
- Numbness, tingling or swelling in the arm on the side of the implant
- Hiccups that will not stop
- Loss of consciousness

In case of a medical emergency, call 911 or go to the nearest hospital emergency center **right away**.

Follow-up Appointments

Your cardiac implantable electronic device (CIED) will need to be checked from time to time. Your doctor will tell you how often your CIED needs to be checked.

Post-implant Visit

Your first visit will be 1 or 2 weeks after implant. Your incision site will be checked. A care team member will check (interrogate) your device to make sure everything is working properly.

Clinic Checks

Regular follow-up appointments will be scheduled every 3 to 6 months. If you are able to send data remotely, you will only need to have in-office clinic visits 1 or 2 times a year. Your doctor will let you know if more frequent checks are needed.

Remote Transmissions from Your Cardiac Device

The remote monitoring service for your CIED is able to transmit data from anywhere in the United States and most places around the world. This information will help your care team monitor how you are doing. Depending on your device model, you may receive a monitor or an app may be installed on your phone.

Most CIEDs send information automatically after initial set up. Models with automatic transmissions can send additional information if a cardiac event occurs.

Data Shared by You

If you are having heart problems, you can send an unscheduled report. You must contact the Cardiac Device Clinic to let your care team know that you are sending data from your device.

Do not use the remote monitor for emergencies. The clinic reviews remote transmissions daily during regular office hours. It is not monitored 24 hours a day.

Magnet Precautions

For your safety, keep items with magnets at least 6 inches away from you and your pacemaker or defibrillator. Most household items are safe and do not affect the function of devices. Magnets can affect most pacemakers by pacing the heart faster than the programmed rate. Magnets can affect defibrillators by preventing the device from detecting fast rhythms and delivering treatment therapy.

Avoid the following:

- Magnetic mattress pads or pillows
- Leaning over an open hood of a running car
- Using chainsaws and arc welding equipment
- Strong energy fields such as radio transmitting towers

The larger the energy field, the further away the items need to be from your device. Moving away from the magnet returns the pacemaker or defibrillator back to its original programming.

Cell Phones

It is unlikely that cell phones will affect your pacemaker.

However, to be safe:

- Keep your cell phone 6 inches away from the implanted pacemaker.
- Use the opposite ear from the side where the pacemaker is implanted.
- **Do not** carry a cell phone in a shirt pocket over your pacemaker.

Anti-Theft and Metal Detectors

It is unlikely that anti-theft or metal detectors may affect your device. However, as a precaution, you should:

- Be aware of any detectors in stores, libraries, courthouses and airports.
- Walk through the detector, but make sure to stay 6 inches away from the walls of the detector.
- **Do not** stand near the detector.
- If you have symptoms, such as chest pain or feeling dizzy, move quickly away from the detector. The symptoms should go away, and your device will resume its normal function.

MR-Conditional Technology

- Some newer pacemakers and ICD systems are FDA approved for use with magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) scanners.
- The entire system including the device and leads must be MR conditional.
- The Cardiac Device Clinic will confirm if your device is MR conditional.

Concerns

- Household equipment, such as a microwave oven, that is working properly should not interfere with the normal function of your CIED.
- If you work around heavy industrial equipment, discuss the potential risks with your doctor.
- Always carry your cardiac device ID card with you.

Healthy Lifestyle Choices

It is important to choose a healthy lifestyle. Here are some actions you can take:

- Quit smoking, if you smoke.
- Maintain a healthy weight.
- Be physically active. Talk with your doctor before starting an exercise program.
- Reduce stress.
- Manage blood sugar levels if you have diabetes.
- Follow a low-sodium diet.

Frequently Asked Questions

When can I shower?

Your care team will let you know when you can shower. This is usually 2 weeks after your implant. Cover the incision site with plastic wrap and secure with tape to keep water out.

When can I drive?

You will need to have a responsible adult drive you home after your procedure. Your doctor will decide when it is safe for you to start driving again, often after 2 weeks.

When can I return to work?

Most people can return to work 2 days after the procedure. It will depend on the type of work you do. Discuss your options with your doctor.

