

## Living with a Pacemaker or ICD

Now that you have a pacemaker or implantable cardioverter defibrillator (ICD), you're probably beginning to feel more secure. Since your heart is functioning more effectively, you may feel you have more energy and begin to resume your normal activities.

But it is important that you stay in touch with us so that we can be sure your device is doing its job properly. That's why we offer follow-up programs for patients with pacemakers and ICDs, not only to check the status of your device, but to answer any questions you may have.

These sections describe what to expect in the weeks, months, and years after your procedure:

### For Patients with Pacemakers

**Two weeks after the procedure:** We will see you at the Arrhythmia Center two weeks after your implantation procedure to check the implantation site and your pacemaker and to answer any questions you may have. To check the pacemaker, we will place a special wand over your device, which will transmit information stored in the generator to tell us how your pacemaker is working.

**Three months later:** We will see you again three months later at our center. At that time we will once again check the function of your pacemaker to see how it is working. We may reprogram your pacemaker to the voltage level that is most appropriate for you so as to prolong battery longevity.

**Subsequent follow-up:** We will need to check the status of your pacemaker every six to twelve months to make sure it is working properly and to check its battery life.

After 3 to 4 years, we may need to monitor your pacemaker more frequently as it ages. This schedule varies depending on whether your device is a single-chamber or dual-chamber model. You will be informed of the monitoring schedule that is appropriate for you.

**What to avoid:** Appliances and machinery that generate a strong electromagnetic field may interfere with your device's ability to function correctly, or may cause it to stop completely.

You should therefore avoid:

- magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) procedures
- nerve stimulators (sometimes used to treat lower back pain, and now being marketed to "tone" abdominal muscles)
- ultrasound tooth cleaning (manual scaling is preferred)
- older model microwave ovens (choose one manufactured since 1996)
- arc welders and other industrial equipment
- antitheft devices in stores -- pass through them quickly, and avoid standing next to them
- electromagnetic scanning devices in airports -- request being searched by hand

Tell every healthcare professional you visit (other doctors, your dentist, chiropractor, optometrist, etc.) that you have a pacemaker so they will be sure not to use any treatments or appliances that may interfere with it.

**Identification cards:** You will receive a temporary I.D. card when you leave the hospital identifying you as a patient with a pacemaker. You will receive a permanent card later from the manufacturer by

mail. Carry this card with you at all times. It has important information about your device and includes your doctor's contact information, in case of an emergency. You can also show it to airport security personnel and to retail store security personnel, should your device set off their antitheft system as you pass through it. If you lose your card or need to change the information, you can contact the manufacturer by phone (consult the booklet you will receive) or visit their Web site.

## For Patients with ICDs

**Two weeks after the procedure:** We will see you at the Arrhythmia Center two weeks after your implantation procedure to check the implantation site and your ICD and to answer any questions you may have. To check the ICD, we will place a special wand over your device, which will transmit information stored in the generator. From this information we can learn when and how many electrical therapies may have been delivered to your heart, whether these therapies corrected the arrhythmia, and the status of the battery and leads.

**Three months later and every three to four months thereafter:** We will see you every three to four months at our center. During each visit we will retrieve and analyze the information stored in your ICD. If necessary, we can reprogram your device to ensure that it continues to work for you in the best way possible.

**Exception:** If between check-ups you experience a shock from your ICD, call us at 201-894-3533. You may need to be seen that day or the next day to ensure that everything is working properly and that you require no additional treatment. If your device delivers multiple shocks, call 911 or your local emergency number for assistance.

**What to avoid:** Appliances and machinery that generate a strong electromagnetic field may interfere with your device's ability to function correctly, or may cause it to stop completely.

You should therefore avoid:

- magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) procedures
- nerve stimulators (sometimes used to treat lower back pain, and now being marketed to "tone" abdominal muscles)
- ultrasound tooth cleaning (manual scaling is preferred)
- older model microwave ovens (choose one manufactured since 1996)
- arc welders and other industrial equipment
- antitheft devices in stores -- pass through them quickly, and avoid standing next to them
- electromagnetic scanning devices in airports -- request being searched by hand
- cellular phones next to your device -- cell phone use is permitted, but avoid keeping it in a breast pocket over your device or holding it over your device at any time during use

Tell every healthcare professional you visit (other doctors, your dentist, chiropractor, optometrist, etc.) that you have an ICD so they will be sure not to use any treatments or appliances that may interfere with it.

**Identification cards:** You will receive a temporary I.D. card when you leave the hospital identifying you as a patient with an ICD. You will receive a permanent card later from the manufacturer.

Carry this card with you at all times. It has important information about your device and includes your doctor's contact information, in case of an emergency. You can also show it to airport security personnel and to retail store security personnel, should your device set off their antitheft system as you pass through it. If you lose your card or need to change the information, you can contact the manufacturer by phone (consult the booklet you will receive) or visit their Web site.