



Patient Information

Pacemaker – Post Implantation

Why have I been given this leaflet?

This leaflet is designed to give you and your family information after having your permanent cardiac pacemaker fitted.

Will I be in pain after the procedure?

You may feel some pain or discomfort during the first few days, so you may wish to take pain relieving medication. Please use your normal pain relief tablets.

There may also be some bruising where the pacemaker was inserted. This usually passes within a few days.

When can I leave hospital?

You will usually be able to go home on the same day or the day after the procedure if all is well.

You will be sent an appointment to return to hospital in around two weeks, to have your device thoroughly checked, the wound inspected, and for staff to answer any questions you may have.

At this two week appointment, you will be given an pacemaker ID card, which contains details of the make and model of your pacemaker. Always carry this with you in case of an emergency.

Depending on your type of pacemaker, you may also be given a remote monitoring box to take home with you. Research has shown that remote monitoring has benefits of both keeping you out of hospital, and increasing your life expectancy.

Please plug the device into a socket in your bedroom or where you normally sleep.

Please check daily that your remote monitoring box is plugged in and switched on. If you go on holiday for more than three weeks please call the device clinic on 01793



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604257 to let us know, as your remote monitoring device will start to alert us if it has had no contact from your pacemaker for more than 21 days.

How soon can I drive?

If you have an ordinary driving licence, you can legally start driving again after one week, as long as:

- You do not have any symptoms, such as dizziness or fainting, that would affect your driving.
- You have not recently had a heart attack or heart surgery.
- No other condition that would disqualify you from driving as suggested by your Doctor / clinician.
- **However, we advise you to avoid driving until after your two week pacemaker check at the hospital.**

If you drive a bus, coach or lorry for a living -

- **Please take advice from your doctor regarding your suitability to return to driving.**
- Inform the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) and your insurance company that you have a pacemaker. You will have been given a DVLA form in your pre-discharge pack.

Will I be able to feel the pacemaker?

You will be able to feel your pacemaker, but you will soon get used to it. At first, it may seem a bit heavy and may feel uncomfortable when you lie in certain positions. Please, do not play with the device.

What can I do?

Keep your arm mobile by gently moving it to avoid getting a frozen shoulder.

Remove dressing 24 hours after procedure and redress with gauze, secured with tape on two sides. Redress as required until you have had your wound check appointment – you will be given a supply of dressings.

You will usually be able to do all the things you want to do after around four weeks.

Check your pacemaker site for any signs of infection such as redness, swelling. Please contact the Wiltshire Cardiac Centre Outpatients on 01793 604063 (Monday – Friday 0900 – 1700) if you notice any signs of infection.



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What can I not do?

It is important to avoid any reaching, pushing, stretching or heavy lifting. This means not hanging out washing or lifting anything from a high shelf.

Avoid strenuous activities, contact sports and any hobby that could put strain on the new pacemaker for around four weeks after having your pacemaker fitted.

We also recommend that you avoid playing golf for three months.

Do not shower or bath for two - three days after the procedure and keep the wound dry. If your wound does become wet, please dry carefully and redress.

Avoid wearing anything that rubs the area, such as braces. Women may need a new style bra with wider straps.

Will I have to have my stitches removed?

It depends on the kind of stitches used – you will be told which you have. Many doctors use soluble stitches that dissolve on their own. If you need to have stitches removed, this will usually be at your wound check appointment. Avoid exposing your wound to sunlight in the first year, as this can cause a darker scar.

Will my pacemaker be affected by electrical equipment?

Most ordinary household electrical equipment is safe to use. This includes microwaves and mobile phones.

Please ensure you follow these guidelines:

- **Induction hobs** – Please avoid, or keep a minimum of one metre distance between you and the hob when it is working.
- **Mobile Phone** – Avoid placing your mobile phone in your breast pocket.
- **Airport security** – Carry your pacemaker ID card, as this must be shown.
- **Electronic surveillance** – Shop anti-theft devices are safe, as long as you pass straight through.
- **MRI scan** – Check with your device physiologist to see if the device is safe to be scanned. **Reprogramming of your device is always required prior to an MRI scan.**
- **Lithotripsy / Electrocautery** – Must be avoided.
- **Work** – Avoid strong magnetic fields; arc welding, diathermy, high power radio and TV transmitters, or direct contact with car ignition systems.



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How often will I need follow-up appointments?

You will need follow-up appointments for the rest of your life. These will usually be every 12 months. Often these appointments can be performed from your own home using your remote monitoring device.

Will I need to have another pacemaker?

Most pacemaker batteries last between six and ten years. After this, you may need to have the battery changed. This is a simple procedure that may or may not require an overnight stay in hospital. The original lead or leads can usually be left in place, although occasionally they will need to be replaced too. At this time we will assess your symptoms to ensure you get the best type of pacemaker for you.

What do I do if I get any symptoms?

If after leaving hospital or at any time in the future you feel symptomatic or have any concerns, please telephone the pacing team for advice on: 01793 604250 or 01793 604257, Monday to Friday 08:30 – 17:30. Alternatively, you can ring 01793 604020 and ask for bleep 1152, Monday to Friday 08:30 – 17:30.

We are committed to patient care.

If you want to comment on the service, please contact us at the time, or write to:

Patient Advice Liaison Service

The Great Western Hospital

Marlborough Rd

Swindon

SN3 6BB

www.gwh.nhs.uk

From 1st January 2019 smoking will not be permitted on any NHS site in England. Smoking will not be permitted within any of our buildings or anywhere outside on our sites. Smoking facilities will not be provided. Please be considerate of others when vaping in hospital grounds.

This information sheet is available to order in other languages and formats. If you would like a copy, please contact us on 01793 604031 or email gwh.pals@nhs.net

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