Oxford University Hospitals
NHS Trust

Oxford Heart Centre

Discharge advice after your Permanent Pacemaker (PPM) or Implantable Loop Recorder (ILR) procedure

Information for patients
This booklet contains important information. Please read it carefully. It contains advice about what to expect after leaving hospital after your cardiac procedure, whether you have had a permanent pacemaker or an implantable loop recorder fitted. It also contains information about what to do when you get home.

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1. Discharge summary

The procedure you had was:

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The device you have received is a:................................................................................................................................................................. (manufacturer)

loop recorder/pacemaker with (none, one, two) leads in your heart. (Delete as appropriate)

Your consultant at the John Radcliffe hospital is:

........................................................................................................................................................................................................

(Your consultant that referred you from your local hospital is:

........................................................................................................................................................................................................

Pacemaker and leads ©2009 Courtesy of Medtronic, Inc

Implantable Loop Recorder and Activator ©2009 Courtesy of Medtronic, Inc
After your discharge from hospital we will send a summary of your hospital stay to your GP or to the Consultant who referred you. This will explain your outcome and planned treatment.

**Follow-up**

You will be sent a follow-up outpatient appointment for a check-up of your new device in six to eight weeks’ time.

This appointment will be sent in the post. If you do not receive an appointment date within four weeks, please call either the Pacing Office at the John Radcliffe hospital or call your local hospital and ask to speak to the secretary of the local Consultant who referred you.

**Pacing Office**
John Radcliffe Hospital
Tel: **01865 220 981**
(Monday to Friday, 9am to 4pm) – please leave a message on the answer machine if we are not able to speak with you.

**Transport to your outpatient appointments**
If you have difficulty getting to your outpatient appointments your GP surgery may have the phone numbers of voluntary transport schemes which operate at subsidised rates. A directory of these services is available at [www.oxonrcc.org.uk](http://www.oxonrcc.org.uk) for residents of the Oxfordshire area.
2. What to do when you get home

After your procedure you should have a quiet evening resting. You may eat and drink as normal, but do not drink any alcohol. You can sleep in your usual position at night time. The next morning you can have a wash, but it is very important to keep the wound completely dry for the first seven days after your procedure. You can have a bath or a wash at any point but you must keep the wound completely dry.

Wound care

- The wound dressing should remain in place for seven days. If the dressing appears dirty you can replace it with a new dressing. Your nurse will give you a supply of replacement dressings before you are discharged.

- If there are any small strip adhesives (Steristrips) underneath the dressing, they should be left in place. They will come off on their own within a week.

- The wound on your chest was stitched closed using:
  □ absorbable stitches – these must not be removed
  □ non-absorbable stitches – these do need to be removed

- **Absorbable stitches** are slowly dissolved by your body and should never normally be removed, as this can lead to your wound opening up and the device and leads becoming infected. Sometimes a small part of a stitch may not fully dissolve, this should be removed by a nurse at your GP surgery or at your follow-up in hospital.

- **Non-absorbable stitches** cannot dissolve on their own and must be removed by your GP or Practice Nurse seven days after the surgery. If this applies to you, you will need to arrange an appointment with the practice nurse at your GP surgery for this to be done.

Date for non-absorbable stitches to be removed:
• **If you have a loop recorder:** To allow the wound to heal, it is advisable to avoid raising your arm above shoulder level on the side of the loop recorder for the next 48 hours.

• **If you have a pacemaker:** To prevent your lead(s) from moving out of position, it is advisable to avoid raising your arm above shoulder level on the side of the pacemaker device for the first 2 weeks.

• It is also important to avoid lifting weights (such as shopping bags, garden rubbish) for the first 6 weeks after the procedure.

• It is advisable not to carry out any strenuous activity for at least 2 weeks.

• It is rare for serious complications to occur after these procedures. The most common problem is skin bruising around the pacemaker site, shoulder and armpit. This may be uncomfortable for a few days. However, if you notice swelling, redness, bleeding or pus, or any other discharge from the wound, you must contact the Pacing Office at the John Radcliffe Hospital immediately.
  
  Tel: 01865 220 981

  You can also leave a message as explained on page 4. If it is after 4pm, please go to your nearest hospital to have the wound examined.

**Bleeding**

It is rare to have severe bleeding from the pacemaker site once you are at home. If bleeding does occur, you should contact your GP surgery, or go to your local minor injuries unit or emergency department.

_Though bleeding is rare, if you have had your procedure carried out as a ‘day patient’ (returning home on the same day), you will need someone responsible to stay with you overnight on the day of your procedure, just in case there is a problem._
Driving
Driving restrictions are different for different devices and vary depending on the reason for the device and your medical history. We will give you specific advice about when you can start driving again.

There are DVLA driving restrictions after these procedures. (Your nurse will tick the section which is relevant to you.)

☐ If you have a Group 1 entitlement licence (car and motorcycle), after a new pacemaker procedure or pacemaker generator replacement, you may not drive for one week.

☐ If you have a Group 2 entitlement licence (HGV and PCV), after a new pacemaker procedure or pacemaker generator replacement, the driving suspension is longer. Please check with the DVLA for the current restrictions.

☐ After a loop recorder implant DVLA regulations and vehicle insurance companies restrict you from driving. Your doctor and nurse will advise you of the driving restrictions applicable to you – please make sure that you are aware of these before you leave.

☐ Your nurse and hospital doctor will confirm with you when you can start driving again

............................................................................................................................................................................................................................. (date you can start driving again).

You must notify the DVLA and your insurance company that you now have a cardiac pacemaker. This should not affect your insurance.

DVLA
Tel: 0300 790 6806
Website: https://www.gov.uk/dvla-medical-enquiries

Return to work
You may return to work from:

...........................................................................................................................................................................................................
3. Medication

Changes in your medication are either listed below or we will give you an information sheet explaining your medication. Your nurse will go through this list with you.

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Warfarin:

☐ If you usually take a medicine called warfarin, and you were advised to stop taking this before your procedure, your nurse will advise you when to begin taking it again.

Date to re-start taking warfarin: ....................................................................................................

4. Pacemaker card

You will be given a special identity card which has important information relevant to your pacemaker settings. Please carry your identity card with you at all times in case this information is needed urgently. In particular, please bring the card with you to your pacemaker out-patients appointment.

If you are travelling abroad, as a precaution we advise that you do not go through the security gate and that the hand held wand is not passed over the pacemaker during security checks. This is because it interrupts the settings of the device. Show the security guard your pacemaker card to explain why you cannot be scanned.

If you are concerned about losing the card, you could photocopy
it and carry the photocopy with you whilst keeping the card in a safe place at home.

All information relevant to your particular kind of pacemaker can be found in the company booklet which will be given to you after your procedure.

5. Loop recorders

If you have had a loop recorder procedure you will be given:

☐ A special loop recorder card which has important information relevant to your loop recorder and its settings. Please carry your loop recorder card with you at all times in case this information is needed urgently. In particular, please bring the card with you to your loop recorder outpatient appointment.

All information relevant to your particular kind of loop recorder can be found in the company booklet which will be given to you after your procedure.

☐ An activator which you should carry with you at all times in case the loop recorder’s memory needs to be activated.

☐ A contact number in case you have had to activate your loop recorder and we need to look at the information that it has stored (01865 220 981 – the Cardiac Rhythm Management office).
6. How to contact us

If you have any questions or concerns about your procedure within **48 hours of your discharge**, please contact the ward you were a patient on.

Ward: ...................................................................................................................................................................................

Telephone: 01865 ..........................................................................................................................................................

If you are calling after 9pm please telephone the Cardiology ward.

Tel: 01865 572 675

01865 572 676

Please be ready to give the following details:

• your name
• date of birth
• your NHS or Hospital number (if close to hand)
• when you were admitted
• the procedure you had
• the name of your Consultant.

This will help us to access your records more quickly and to liaise with your medical team, should this be necessary.

After 48 hours, please contact your GP for advice.

7. Further information

Arrhythmia Alliance
www.heartrhythmcharity.org.uk

You may also find information on the NHS Choices website useful: www.nhs.uk/Pages/HomePage.aspx

Our hospital website has information on all our cardiac services: www.ouh.nhs.uk
This booklet has been produced through the collaboration of doctors, nurses and patients. We welcome your feedback.

If you have any comments about the content of this booklet please put them in writing to:

Practice Development Nurse
Cardiac Medicine
Cardiac Angiography Suite
Level -1, Oxford Heart Centre
John Radcliffe Hospital
Oxford OX3 9DU

If you have a specific requirement, need an interpreter, a document in Easy Read, another language, large print, Braille or audio version, please call 01865 221 473 or email PALSJR@ouh.nhs.uk

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www.ouh.nhs.uk/information

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