

Oxford Heart Centre

# Discharge advice after your Permanent Pacemaker (PPM) procedure

Information for patients



This booklet contains important advice about your discharge from hospital after your procedure to implant a pacemaker. It contains information about what to do when you get home and how to maintain a healthy lifestyle. Please read it carefully.

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## Discharge summary

The procedure you had was:

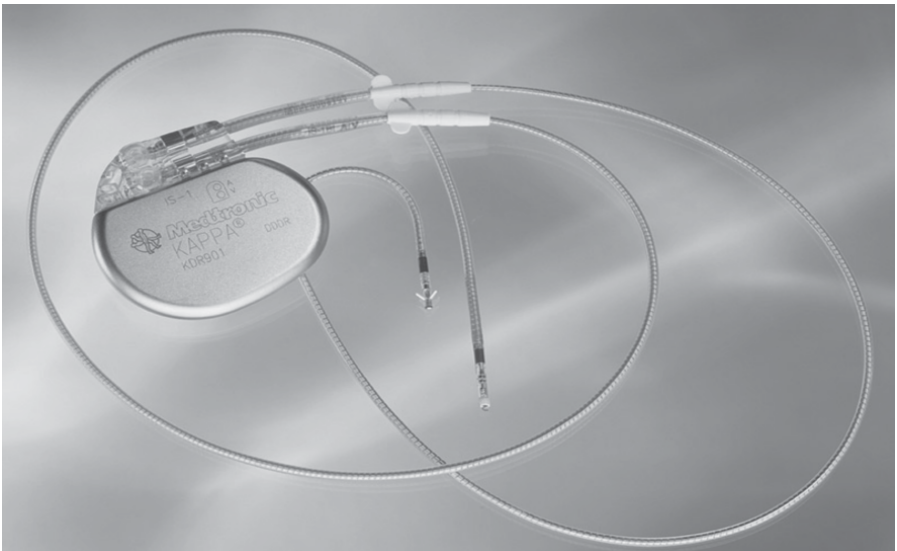
- Implant of a new pacemaker:  one lead  two leads  
 Pacemaker generator change

(Name of manufacturer): .....

Your consultant is:

.....

After your discharge from hospital we will send a summary of your hospital stay to your GP or to the Consultant who referred you, explaining your outcome and planned treatment.



Pacemaker and leads ©2009 Courtesy of Medtronic, Inc

## Follow-up

**You will be seen in the pacemaker clinic around two months after your implant or generator change. You will then usually be seen every year.**

### **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. If you live in Oxfordshire, a directory of these services is available at [www.communityfirstoxon.org/](http://www.communityfirstoxon.org/)

## What to do when you get home

After your procedure you should have a quiet evening resting.

If you have had sedation, in the next 24 hours:

- do not go to work
- do not drive a motorised vehicle (your insurance will not cover you – see 'Driving' section for more details)
- do not operate machinery
- do not make important decisions
- do not sign legally binding documents
- do not drink alcohol.

You may eat and drink as normal and can sleep in your usual position at night time.

The next morning you can have a bath or wash, but it is very important to keep the wound completely dry for the first seven days after your procedure.

### **Induction hobs**

If you have an induction hob, this could affect the way your device works. If you have an induction hob and you have any questions about this, please speak to your nurse or hospital doctor at either your follow-up appointment or over the telephone.

## Wound care

The wound dressing should remain in place and dry for seven days. If the dressing becomes dirty you can replace it with a new one. 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 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 need to be removed - 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 and must be removed by your GP or Practice Nurse seven days after the surgery. If you have this type of stitch, you will need to arrange an appointment with the practice nurse at your GP's surgery for this to be done.

Date for non-absorbable stitches to be removed:

...../...../.....

### **If you have had a new pacemaker fitted:**

To prevent your lead(s) from moving out of position, please avoid raising your arm above shoulder level on the side of the pacemaker device for the first two weeks. However, it is important to keep your shoulder relaxed and gently move it regularly, to prevent a 'frozen' shoulder.

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

You should avoid carrying out any strenuous activity for at least two weeks.

It is rare for serious complications to occur after this procedure. The most common problem is skin bruising around the pacemaker site, shoulder and armpit/underarm. This may be uncomfortable for a few days.

If you notice swelling, redness, bleeding or pus, or any other discharge from the wound, you must contact the Cardiac Rhythm Management Office at the John Radcliffe Hospital immediately.

Tel: **01865 220 981**

If you are calling after 5.00pm, you can leave a message or 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

There are DVLA driving restrictions which apply after these procedures. Driving restrictions are different for each device 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.

*(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.

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

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

- 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.

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: [www.gov.uk/contact-the-dvla](http://www.gov.uk/contact-the-dvla)



## Return to work

You may return to work from:

.....

## 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.

.....

.....

.....

.....

### **Anticoagulants**

- If you usually take a medicine called warfarin, rivaroxaban, apixaban, dabigatran, edoxaban, 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 anticoagulant: .....

## Pacemaker card

You will be given a pacemaker identity card, which has important information about your pacemaker settings. Please carry your pacemaker identity card with you at all times, in case this information is needed urgently.

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 your pacemaker during security checks. This is because it interrupts the settings of the device. Show the security guard your pacemaker identity card to explain why you cannot be scanned. This also applies to shop security posts. Just walk straight through, without stopping in the doorway.

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. You could also give a copy to your family/ carers, but remember to replace these if the information on your card changes.

## 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: .....

Tel: 01865 .....

If you are calling after 9.00pm please telephone the Cardiology ward.

Tel: **01865 572 675** or **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 efficiently and to liaise with your medical team, if needed.**

**After 48 hours, please contact your GP for advice.**

## Further information

This booklet is designed to complement other publications available about heart disease and cardiac procedures. The British Heart Foundation produces a number of patient leaflets, which can be ordered from them or downloaded from their website.

### **British Heart Foundation**

Tel: 0300 330 3311

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

### **Arrhythmia Alliance**

Website: [www.heartrhythmalliance.org](http://www.heartrhythmalliance.org)

You may also find useful information on the NHS Choices website:

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

Our hospital website has information on all our Cardiac services:

Website: [www.ouh.nhs.uk](http://www.ouh.nhs.uk)

This booklet has been produced through the collaboration of doctors, nurses, cardiac physiologists 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 **[PALS@ouh.nhs.uk](mailto:PALS@ouh.nhs.uk)**

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[www.ouh.nhs.uk/information](http://www.ouh.nhs.uk/information)

