

Family Education Sheet

Home Care Instructions for Adults with Pacemakers



Boston Children's Hospital

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This sheet gives you important safety information about your pacemaker and how to care for it at home.

Please read the instruction booklet you were given with your pacemaker for detailed information.

Key points

- Your pacemaker will send the care team information remotely (without you needing to come in for an appointment).
- You will need time to heal after your pacemaker is put in.
- Keep all electronic devices and magnets 6 inches away from the generator.

When should I call my doctor or nurse practitioner?

Call us right away if you have any of these:

- A fever higher than 101° F / 38.5° C (taken by mouth)
- Redness, swelling, fluid or pus leaking from the wound
- A heart rate lower than the lower rate limit (LRL) of your pacemaker

Contact us

- **Monday–Friday, 7 a.m. – 4 p.m.:** Please call the Pacemaker Office at 617-355-4676.
- **After hours or if your call is urgent:** Please call the hospital operator at 617-355-6369 and page the electrophysiology (EP) doctor on call (pager #3737).

What do I need to know about my pacemaker?

- Your pacemaker is set at _____. This means that your heart rate will not go below _____ beats a minute for more than a few seconds.
- You'll get a booklet about your pacemaker before you leave the hospital. You'll also get a temporary ID card with your name, type of pacemaker and your doctor's phone number. You'll get a permanent card in the mail in 6–8 weeks from the device company. **Keep this card with you at all times in case of an emergency.**
- We recommend that you buy a medical ID bracelet (like a MedicAlert bracelet) that states you have a heart condition and a pacemaker.

What is remote monitoring?

- Remote monitoring is a way for you to send your medical team information about your pacemaker from home in between doctor's appointments. It doesn't take the place of in-person appointments.
- Our electrophysiology (EP) nurses will go through your home monitoring system with you in detail before going home. Ask your nurse if you'll get your monitor while you're in the hospital or by mail.

How do I care for the wound?

- You will most likely have dissolvable stitches underneath the skin. You won't see them.
- There will be an antibacterial solution called Dermabond over the incision. It dries to form a clear, shiny purple coating that seals the wound.
 - The Dermabond dries up and peels off on its own in a few weeks. **Don't pick at the coating.** It's there to stop an infection from happening.
- **You may take a shower the day after** getting your pacemaker.
- **Avoid rubbing the incision when washing.**
- **Keep the incision dry and avoid getting it wet.** Do not go underwater, take a bath or go in a hot tub or pool for 2 weeks after the procedure.
- **Avoid using creams or lotions** on the incision site.

Will I have any pain?

You may feel some discomfort. Your doctor or nurse will give you instructions on how to help manage your pain at home.

Can I be active?

- You should not drive on the day of the procedure.
- It's OK for you to lift your arms slowly above your shoulders.
- **If you have had a generator (battery) change:** Avoid heavy lifting (more than 10 pounds) for 2 weeks
- **If you have had new leads implanted:** Avoid heavy lifting or intense movements above the shoulder level (basketball, volleyball, swimming) for 4 weeks.
- Your doctor will give you activity guidelines at your follow-up appointment.

Should I avoid electronics?

- You should keep all electronics and magnets 6 inches away from the generator. This helps prevent interference with the pacemaker.
- Some power tools and very large electromagnetic tools have different rules. Check your pacemaker booklet for information about these kinds of tools.