



Discharge information following Implantation of a Cardiac Defibrillator (ICD)

Building healthier lives

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To see all of our current patient information leaflets please visit
www.uhb.nhs.uk/patient-information-leaflets.htm

Prior to admission and before discharge from hospital, you will have the opportunity to discuss in detail all of the following issues with your Nurse Specialists. This is an ongoing process and it can be difficult to remember and retain a lot of information.

How to get in touch with us

If you have any worries or need advice, you can contact the Cardiology department:

Queen Elizabeth Hospital Birmingham	0121 371 2545
Good Hope Hospital	0121 424 9675
Solihull Hospital	0121 424 4358
Heartlands Hospital	0121 424 4358
Monday–Friday 08:00–17:00	

If you have access to the Internet you can email us with questions or to request that we call you back.

Email: cardiacdeviceteam@uhb.nhs.uk

Please leave your name, hospital number, contact number and a brief outline of your request.

For emergency advice only during evenings and at weekends contact:

Queen Elizabeth Hospital Birmingham CCU	0121 371 2562
Good Hope Hospital CCU	0121 424 7467
08:00–17:00 Monday–Friday only	

Getting back to normal after your surgery

- Until your first device check, you should avoid heavy lifting and stretching your affected arm up above shoulder level. This restriction applies until you have your first device check at approximately one month post-implant. Housework such as vacuuming and ironing can be done with caution
- Gradually increase your exercise as you feel able
- Avoid activities that could be dangerous if you receive a shock i.e. swimming alone, climbing high ladders or using dangerous electrical equipment, such as a chainsaw
- Partaking in dangerous sports such as scuba diving is not advisable
- Avoid contact sports such as rugby or martial arts .It is unlikely you will damage your defibrillator but damage or displacement of your pacing lead(s) could occur. Damage to the surrounding skin may lead to an infection
- If you still work and you think equipment in your work environment may cause a problem or is a concern to you please inform us and if necessary, a workplace visit can be organised to check out equipment

Sex

This can be resumed when you feel up to it. If you happen to have a shock during sexual intercourse, it will not affect your partner but it can be very upsetting.

Appliances

Microwave ovens, radios and other everyday appliances do not affect your ICD as long as they are in good working order. You should maintain a distance of at least 60cm/2ft between your device and the cooking plate of a magnetic induction hob. Mobile and cordless phones should be kept 15cm away from your defibrillator. Use the appliance on the opposite side to your device and do not carry the phone in a breast pocket. Avoid getting too close to magnets such as those in security systems at shop exits.

Driving

Driving restrictions can be very confusing at first glance.

There are many reasons why defibrillators are fitted, therefore different restrictions apply.

You will be advised individually by medical and nursing staff which restriction applies to you specifically.

Your DVLA driving restriction is for:

We will offer any help we can to help you fill out your specific forms.

If you hold a Group 2 (heavy goods vehicle) licence, this will need to be discussed in detail with you by your consultant.

You may find this number useful when trying to contact DVLA:
0300 790 6806

It is advisable to inform your insurance company about your ICD.

Travel

This is not usually restricted. When going through security at an airport, avoid going through the security archway by showing your ID card and informing the security staff on duty. Comprehensive, yet affordable travel insurance is obviously a concern for many people. The following companies and charities are reported to be quite fair and worth trying.

British Heart Foundation

Tel: **0300 330 3311**

Website: **www.bhf.org**

All Clear Travel

Tel: **0870 777 9339**

Website: **www.allcleartravel.co.uk**

Free Spirit Travel

Tel: **0845 230 5000**

Website: **www.free-spirit.com**

The Arrhythmia Alliance has information on insurance companies who appear to be receptive to people with rhythm problems and implantable devices.

You can access them at: **www.heartrhythmcharity.org.uk**

Shocks

If and when you have your first shock you need to inform us. We will arrange to see you as soon as possible to obtain the information from the device memory.

If a shock occurs Monday–Friday 08:00–17:00 please call the ECG department:

Queen Elizabeth Hospital Birmingham	0121 371 2545
Good Hope Hospital	0121 424 9675
Solihull Hospital	0121 424 4358
Heartlands Hospital	0121 424 3736

If you feel very unwell, experience several shocks or have been unconscious for 30 seconds or more, ask someone to phone an ambulance to take you to your nearest Emergency Department.

Medical Procedures

Dental treatment – inform your dentist you have a defibrillator. Drills and ultrasonic cleaning equipment are safe. You should not need antibiotics prior to any treatment.

Operations – inform your surgeon you have an ICD and ask them to contact your device team at Queen Elizabeth Hospital Birmingham if they have any questions regarding the safety of the procedure you are scheduled to have.

Other tests

Inform the staff that you have an ICD, as you may not be able to have certain tests/investigations. In particular, MRI scans are not permitted once you have a defibrillator implanted (unless ICD is labelled MRI safe).

If you suffer from an upset stomach (diarrhoea and vomiting) and are currently taking tablets for your heart, you should seek prompt medical advice. Salt and medication levels may become low and could affect your heart rhythm.

In the event you need to have radiation therapy/radiotherapy, please inform us as your defibrillator will need to be checked more frequently.

Remember to always have your ID card with you.

Medic Alert bracelets/neck chains

Some patients find these useful and there are lots of companies/organisations providing this service, so shop around.

Medic Alert

Freephone: **0800 581 420**

Website: **www.medicalert.co.uk**

Medi-Tag

Tel: **0121 200 1616**

Website: **www.medi-tag.co.uk**

Website: **www.theidbandco.com/Alert-Bands**

If you live alone, you may wish to consider a scheme such as the Careline Call system. Careline is a provider of emergency alarm monitoring in the UK. Tel: **0845 034 7070**

As a backup safety mechanism, implantable defibrillators have an alarm/alert system switched on. Should you hear either an alarm similar to an ambulance siren or feel a vibration around the device, please contact us on any of the numbers you have been given. We will ask you to come to clinic at your earliest convenience.

Diaphragmatic pacing – twitch (CRT devices)

The left ventricular pacing wire can occasionally stimulate a nerve in your chest to cause the diaphragm to pulsate. If this happens, you may notice the left side of your stomach start to twitch, especially if you sit or lie in a certain position. This is not dangerous but can be uncomfortable. If you notice this, do not panic. Call us on the number you have been given and we can then see you in clinic. In most cases the problem can be solved with a simple painless adjustment of the ICD's settings.

Monitoring of your device at home

The model and type of your pacemaker is decided during your operation. The decision is based on which device will best suit your individual needs. Some devices may have the capability of being monitored at home by use of a small box which is plugged in close to your bed. This box reduces the number of times you need to attend hospital. If your pacemaker can do this, we will let you know and tell you how it works.

Deactivation of your defibrillator

This is a sensitive topic for most people and it may be on your mind but you may not know how to bring the subject up either with your family, or your health professionals. For some patients with implantable defibrillators and for many different health reasons, not always related to your heart, your health status may change. You may want to change your mind regarding whether or not your defibrillator remains switched on and capable of delivering shocks.

With the timely help and intervention of your medical and nursing teams, this sensitive issue can be discussed by the staff looking after your defibrillator. We will endeavour to help you and your loved ones come to a decision acceptable to all concerned.

Local support Groups

Good Hope Hospital has a local support group.

Their website is: www.suttonicdgroup.blogspot.com

Tel: **01827 286913**

Email: bill@thecastle39.freeserve.co.uk

Email: pughk1@msn.com

Identification card

You will be given this prior to discharge. Please keep this safe and with you at all times.

Wound care

You will be given detailed wound care advice on discharge.

Try to avoid touching or rubbing the wound area unnecessarily. Good hand hygiene is the best form of infection control. Wash your hands before and after your dressing change.

Bruising around the site and into the breast area may, in some people, be quite extensive, especially if you are taking blood-thinning medications such as aspirin, clopidogrel (Plavix), warfarin or any combination of these medications.

If there is any sign of infection around the wound, i.e. redness, feels hot or sore, if you feel unwell or if there is any increase in swelling at the site, then please contact us as soon as possible.

Caring for your wound

- Paper stitches – if your Steri Strips do not fall off within seven days, please remove them
- Your stitches do not need to be removed, they will dissolve naturally
- Your stitches need to be removed on or around _____. Please make an appointment with the nurse at your GP surgery for this

How to care for your wound

It may not be necessary for a nurse to check your wound following discharge. It is therefore important that you observe your wound on a daily basis and carry out the following:

- Wash and dry your hands thoroughly before and after touching your wound
- Keep the dressing on for seven days. You may shower but keep the dressing out of the direct water flow

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- A shower or running lukewarm water over your wound is best. Do not soak in a bath until the wound has fully healed
 - Pat the wound dry with a clean towel
 - Do not rub your wound when washing as this can delay healing
 - Do not use perfumed soaps, creams etc. on the wound until completely healed
 - After a week or so you should not need a dressing over the area

Signs of infection

If you are unwell with symptoms of infection (temperature above 38 degrees C) please ask your healthcare provider to consider a diagnosis of device related infection.

Signs to look out for are:

- pain or tenderness
- localised swelling
- redness and heat
- discharge (pus) – this is something that happens quite late on
- feeling generally unwell

Nurse's signature: _____

Print name: _____

Queen Elizabeth Hospital Birmingham

0121 371 2545

Good Hope Hospital

0121 424 9675

Solihull Hospital

0121 424 4358

Heartlands Hospital

0121 424 3736

Monday–Friday 08:00–17:00



The Trust provides free monthly health talks on a variety of medical conditions and treatments. For more information visit www.uhb.nhs.uk/health-talks.htm or call 0121 371 4323.

Cardiology

University Hospitals Birmingham

Mindelsohn Way, Edgbaston

Birmingham, B15 2GW

Telephone: 0121 371 2000