Home Care after a Pacemaker or ICD Implant

Wound care

- Keep your incision (surgery wound) dry for 3 days.
- After 3 days, you may remove the outer bandage. Keep the strips of tape on. They will be removed at your clinic visit.
- Check for signs of infection each day. These include increased redness, swelling or drainage, or a fever over 101°F (38.3°C). Call us if you see any of these signs.
- If there are no signs of infection, you may shower in 3 days. (If you take a tub bath, keep the wound dry until it is fully healed.)
  - Stand with your back to the shower to prevent the water directly hitting your wound.
  - Pat the wound dry; do not rub the wound.
- If you take a tub bath, keep the wound dry until it is fully healed.
- You may cover the wound with a loose, dry dressing to protect it from things like bra straps, seat belts or handbags until it is healed.
- Do not use lotions, ointments or powders on the wound site.

Pain

You may have mild to medium pain for 3 to 5 days. Take acetaminophen (Tylenol) or ibuprofen (Advil) for the pain. Call us if the pain is severe or lasts more than 5 days.

Activity

- You should slowly go back to your normal activities after 24 hours. Healing will take 4 to 6 weeks.
- No driving for 3 days.
- For at least 4 weeks:
  - Do not raise your affected arm above your shoulder.
  - Do not use your affected arm to push, pull or lift anything over 10 pounds.
  - Do not go swimming or boating alone. No swimming until your wound is fully healed.
  - Avoid climbing a ladder alone. It is best to stay within 4 feet of the ground.
  - Avoid anything that may cause rough contact or a hard hit to your chest. This includes football, hockey and other contact sports.

Follow-up visits

Return to the clinic in 7 to 10 days to have your device and wound checked. If you have an ICD, you will return in one month as well.

The battery in your device will need to be checked every 3 to 6 months. As it gets older, we will check it more often.
**Telling others about your device**

Before you have any medical tests or treatment, tell the doctors, dentists and other care providers about your device. There are a few tests and treatments that may interfere with your device. These include MRI, radiation therapy, electrocautery and others. Your care team may need to take special steps to keep you safe.

Before you leave the hospital, you will receive a temporary ID card. A permanent card will be mailed to you about 6 to 8 weeks later. **Always carry the ID card with you.** It has important details about your device.

You will also need to get a MedicAlert ID that says you have a pacemaker or ICD. Please ask us for a MedicAlert brochure, or go to [www.medicalert.org](http://www.medicalert.org).

**Safety near electrical equipment**

All of these are **safe** to use if kept in good condition:

- Microwaves
- Radios
- Cordless phones
- Remote controls
- Small electrical tools
- **Cell phones:** Keep cell phones at least 6 inches from your device. Do not carry a cell phone in a pocket near your device.
- Security gates: It is okay to walk through security gates at airports and department stores. Tell airport security that you have a pacemaker or ICD—they should keep the screening wand at least 6 inches from your device. Full-body scanners are safe.
- Planes and trains: It is okay to fly or take a train.

Avoid the following:

- MRI tests in the hospital (unless you have a Medtronic Revo MRI SureScan pacemaker)
- Arc welding, chain saws and high-powered industrial or commercial tools
- Power lines, power plants and large power generators
- Electric body fat scales
- Magnetic mattress pads or pillows
- Never use a firearm while holding it on the same side as the device

**If you have an ICD: what to do after a shock**

Call the device clinic if you think you have been shocked. A shock could mean that your condition has changed and you need to see a doctor.

If you think you’ve been shocked:

1. Stop what you are doing and rest.
2. If you feel fine before and after the shock, call the device clinic when you have a chance.
3. If you feel unwell or receive more than one shock, call 911 or go to the emergency room.

**Questions?**

Please call your care team.