

# Permanent Pacemaker

## Care instructions

Please follow these instructions to help maintain long-term success of your permanent pacemaker in daily life. Take care to follow the restrictions and precautions. Be sure to have your pacemaker checked regularly. Share these instructions with anyone who may assist in your home care.

You will receive a temporary identification (ID) card for your pacemaker before you leave the hospital. A permanent ID card from the manufacturer will be mailed to you in six weeks to eight weeks. Carry your ID card at all times.

### Restrictions

You may resume your regular activities with only a few restrictions. Ask your electrophysiologist about driving a car, returning to work and continuing any recommended exercises and walking program.

#### For two weeks

- Avoid raising your arm (on the side your pacemaker is placed) above shoulder level.
- Avoid lifting more than 10 pounds.
- Avoid sexual activity.

#### For four weeks

Avoid vigorous activity, especially of upper body and arms, including golf.

#### For long-term

Avoid contact sports or activity that involves rough contact near your pacemaker.

### Your incision

Some swelling and bruising at your incision site, which may last six weeks to eight weeks, is normal. Inspect your incision daily for changes. Either tape or a liquid adhesive covers your incision. Do not

remove them. Stitches under the skin do not need to be removed. If you have:

- Tape (adhesive strips)
  - Keep the adhesive strips dry for three days. They may loosen or fall off when wet.
  - You may shower or bathe three days after your procedure.
  - The pacemaker clinic nurse will remove the strips at your first follow-up visit (one week to two weeks after your procedure).
- Liquid adhesive (Dermabond®)
  - Dermabond will remain in place for about 14 days and then naturally wear off your skin.
  - You may shower or bathe the day after your procedure. Do not scrub, soak, scratch or apply tape to the adhesive.

Wash your hands with soap and water frequently. Hand washing is the most important thing you can do to prevent infection.

### Precautions

#### Magnetic fields

Avoid strong magnetic fields. They may interfere with your pacemaker. Items to avoid:

- magnets (on or near your pacemaker)
- magnetic resonance imaging scan (MRI)
- electrocautery devices (use heat to destroy tissue in surgery)
- diathermy devices (use heat to provide deep tissue treatment in physical therapy)
- alternator of a running car engine (close contact, within two feet)
- radiation therapy (talk to your pacemaker clinic nurse before receiving)
- CB or ham radio antenna (holding the antenna or being near the magnetic base)

## Permanent pacemaker (cont'd)

- arc welders or gas-powered chainsaws
- retail antitheft systems or electronic surveillance equipment (Walk through at a normal pace. It is safe. However, do not linger in or around these areas.)

### Cellular phones

You may use a cellular phone if you:

- Keep the phone at least six inches from where your pacemaker is implanted.
- Hold the phone to the ear opposite from where your pacemaker is implanted.
- Do not carry the phone in the breast pocket of a shirt on the side your pacemaker is implanted.

### Travel

- Present your ID card for your pacemaker to airport security.
- Walk through the metal detector at a normal pace. It is safe. However, your pacemaker may set off the metal detector.

## Follow-up care

Have your pacemaker checked regularly at the Park Nicollet Pacemaker Clinic to make sure it is working properly. The pacemaker nurse examines your rhythm history, pacemaker function and battery status. The electrophysiologist reviews the results.

- Schedule your first follow-up visit to the clinic one week to two weeks after your pacemaker is implanted.
- Arrange ongoing checkups every three months through clinic visits and via remote home monitor.

## When to call

Call the pacemaker clinic nurse within 24 hours if you have any of these symptoms:

- increased tenderness, puffiness, redness, drainage or separation of your incision
- swelling in your arm (on the side your pacemaker is implanted)
- sustained fever of 101°F or higher
- chills and shaking
- dizziness, lightheadedness or difficulty breathing
- prolonged hiccups

## Phone numbers

- Park Nicollet Pacemaker and IDC Clinic  
Weekdays—8 a.m. to 5 p.m.  
952-993-3675

A nurse will call you back.

- Park Nicollet Methodist Hospital  
Weekday evenings—5 p.m. to 7 a.m.  
Weekends—24 hours  
952-993-5000

Identify yourself as a patient and ask the operator to speak to the “on-call” cardiologist. A doctor will call you back.