



Patient Information

PACEMAKERS

Pacemakers are used in patients who have bradycardia—a slow heart beat. When the pacemaker detects that your heart rate is too slow, it emits electrical impulses. Each of these impulses triggers your heart to beat, helping it to speed up and attain a more regular rhythm.

Before Your Pacemaker Procedure

Prior to your procedure, please pay attention to the following:

- Call 585-275-8256 after 4:30 p.m. the day before the procedure to find out when and where to report on the day of the procedure. Please be sure to arrive on time.
- Prepare a list of all current medication you are taking, how much, when you take them and when the last dose was taken.
- Inform your doctor or nurse practitioner of all medications you are currently taking. You may be asked to decrease or stop taking one or more of your medicines, but do not stop any medications unless instructed to do so.

During Your Pacemaker Procedure

Your nurse will prepare you for the pacemaker procedure by:

- Asking you to remove all jewelry, dentures, prostheses, and contact lenses. You may wear glasses during the procedure.
- Applying the automatic blood pressure cuff and heart monitor to your arm, and attaching a small clip to your finger to monitor your oxygen level.

- Inserting an intravenous line (IV) into your forearm to provide medications (including anesthesia) and fluids during and following the procedure.

The doctor will thoroughly explain the procedure and answer any questions before starting. The doctor will then begin the procedure, which usually takes 1-2 hours. If you need anything or experience any discomfort, please tell your nurse.

Care Following Your Pacemaker Procedure

After your procedure, you will be taken from the operating room to a patient care unit. The nurses on this unit are experienced in caring for patients who have received a pacemaker. Your nurse will frequently check your heart rate, blood pressure and incision.

The pacemaker procedure can be performed on either an inpatient or outpatient basis. Your doctor will let you know prior to the procedure if you will need to stay in the hospital overnight.

Discharge Instructions for Pacemaker Procedure

Following your pacemaker procedure, your doctor will have a few instructions for you to follow when you return home, including wound care:

- Keep the incision dry for five days. You may shower on the sixth day after the procedure. Remove the bandage over the incision five days after the procedure. Do not remove the steri-strips (used instead of stitches). These will fall off in two to four weeks.
- Alternatively, your incision may be closed with medical adhesive, in which case, there is no bandage, but you should keep the site clean. You may shower the next day.
- Do not raise your elbow on the side of the pacemaker above shoulder level for 4-6 weeks, unless specifically instructed by your doctor.
- No heavy lifting (no more than 10 pounds) for one week.
- No driving for one week.

Notify your doctor at 585.275.4775 if you experience any of the following:

- Severe Dizziness
- Fainting
- Shortness of breath
- Chest pain/pressure
- Extreme Weakness
- Any signs of infection of the incision (redness, swelling, fever, etc.)

Heart Rhythm Disturbance Possible Signs

- Dizziness
- Nausea or vomiting
- Fainting
- Shortness of breath
- Chest pain/pressure
- Weakness
- Rapid irregular heart rate (palpitations)
- Temporary blind spots

Contact us if you need more information or would like to meet with one of our specialists, please call us at 585.275.4775. You can also visit our web site at heart.urmc.edu.

For information on other medical services available at the University of Rochester Medical Center, please call 585.275.2838. Or visit us at URMC.edu.