

Patient information factsheet

Your cardiac rhythm management device: ICD

We have given you this factsheet because you have been implanted with an implantable cardioverter defibrillator (ICD).

What is an ICD?

An ICD is used to treat fast heart rhythms and heart rhythms which can cause your heart to beat too slowly or miss beats.

What you need to know

Please keep a careful eye on the wound site. Leave the dressing on for five to seven days and keep it clean and dry. Once you have removed the dressing, keep the area clean and dry until the wound is well healed.

Look out for any signs of infection, such as:

- redness or soreness
- raised appearance
- discharge
- raised temperature
- sudden severe pain at the wound site

If you have any concerns about your wound site, contact the cardiac rhythm management department between 8am and 5pm, Monday to Friday.

Outside of these hours, go to your nearest emergency department.

You should restrict your arm movements on the side of your body on which the device is implanted until your first follow-up appointment. This will allow the lead(s) time to settle into your heart muscle. Avoid motions that stretch the chest muscles on the side of your ICD.

Do not:

- lift heavy objects (nothing heavier than a full kettle of water)
- lift your arm above shoulder height
- stretch your arm back behind your body
- use strenuous pushing or pulling motions

It is important to still use your arm for light activities to maintain movement in your shoulder joint.

Your first appointment with the cardiac rhythm management (CRM) team will be around six weeks after your procedure. At this appointment, we will:

- check your ICD
- review your wound site
- answer any questions you may have

Home monitoring

After your first appointment in clinic, we will check your ICD via your home monitor. Your home monitor sends information through to the department, which we then review to check the function of your ICD. Keep your monitor plugged in at home. We will send you a letter instructing you how and when to use it.

Your home monitor may occasionally light up. This is normal, and may be because your monitor is doing an update. Please do not send a manual transmission if this occurs. If you are concerned about the function of your home monitor, please call the helpline number provided with your device.

Your home monitor may mean you do not have to come into the hospital for as many appointments. When we do need you to come into the hospital to have your ICD checked, we will send you an appointment letter. Please bring a list of your current medication with you to any appointments. There is no need to bring your home monitor.

What to do if your ICD alarms

Your ICD will perform automatic checks on a daily basis. If any of these checks find a measurement out of range, your ICD will alert you to this with either a noise or vibration. We will demonstrate this to you. **If your ICD alarms, contact us as soon as possible using the telephone numbers in the box below.**

What to do if you receive shock therapy

Your ICD can give your heart electric pulses or shock therapy to get your heart rhythm back to normal. **If this happens, contact us as soon as possible using the telephone numbers in the box below.**

Call 999 for an ambulance if you:

- suddenly feel very unwell
- lose consciousness
- receive shock therapy multiple times

Do not drive yourself to hospital.

Telephone numbers

- Between 8am and 5pm, Monday to Friday, telephone the cardiac rhythm management department on **023 8120 6404**.
- Outside of these hours, telephone the hospital switchboard on **023 8077 7222** and ask to be put through to the cardiology bleep holder. Please have your ID card ready when you call.

Magnets

Please be aware that using any device containing a magnet within 15cm of your implanted device forces it to function in a different mode. It will go back to its usual mode as soon as you move away from the magnet. Some newer mobile phones include magnets, so we advise you to use phones with the opposite hand to where your device is implanted, and to not keep a mobile in a shirt pocket.

Deactivation of shock therapy

There may be a point in time when you (often after having discussions with your family and/or medical team) decide that you would like us to deactivate (turn off) the shock therapy option on your ICD. Turning off the shock therapy option is a simple and painless outpatient appointment which will stop your ICD from trying to treat any rapid, dangerous heart rhythms with a life-saving shock.

Some people choose to have the shock therapy option turned off if they sign a DNAR (do not attempt resuscitation) order or if their clinical condition gets worse. In these circumstances, turning off the shock therapy option can increase your chance of a more peaceful end of life scenario, as you won't experience the distress of receiving unnecessary shocks.

When making this difficult decision, it is important to note that:

- turning off the shock therapy option will not affect your ICD's pacing function, so your ICD will continue to provide support if your heart beats too slow
- many people go on to live for months or years after the shock therapy option is turned off
- we can turn the shock therapy option back on if you change your mind or your circumstances change later on

If you would like to discuss any of the above in more detail, please contact us.

Contact us

If you have any questions or concerns regarding your device, please contact us.

Cardiac rhythm management (CRM) department

Telephone: **023 8120 6404** (Monday to Friday, 8am to 5pm)

Email: crm@uhs.nhs.uk

Outside of these hours, please contact the hospital switchboard on **023 8077 7222** and ask to speak to the cardiovascular and thoracic bleed holder.

My Medical Record

My Medical Record is an online service provided by University Hospital Southampton NHS Foundation Trust (UHS) that gives you access to your own digital health record.

On My Medical Record, you will be able to:

- message either the CRM nurses or physiologists via a messaging tool, or send a photograph of your wound site
- find out more information about your cardiac device and other arrhythmia procedures or issues (see 'My Conditions' section)
- see a list of your upcoming appointments (please note that future appointments via your home monitoring system will **not** show here)

For more information about My Medical Record, please visit:

www.uhs.nhs.uk/for-patients/my-medical-record

Once you have access to My Medical Record, please contact the CRM physiologists or nurses and ask for the CRM pathway to be added to your profile. Please note that we will need your UHS hospital number or NHS number to be able to do this.

Useful links

For additional information, please see our website www.uhs.nhs.uk and search for 'device follow up'.

If you are a patient at one of our hospitals and need this document translated, or in another format such as easy read, large print, Braille or audio, please telephone **0800 484 0135** or email **patientsupporthub@uhs.nhs.uk**

For help preparing for your visit, arranging an interpreter or accessing the hospital, please visit **www.uhs.nhs.uk/additionalsupport**