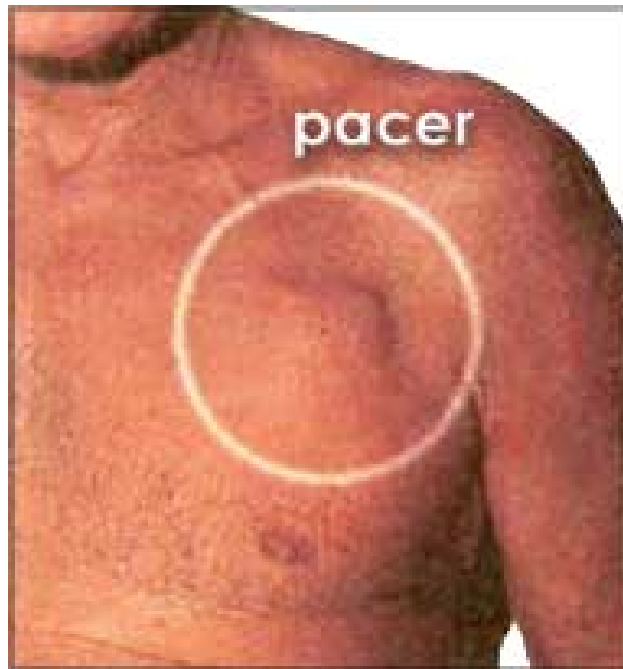


PATHWAY TO YOUR PACEMAKER



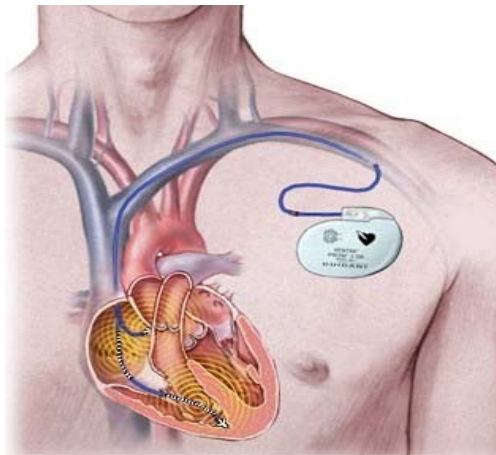
Patient Information Booklet

(Disponible en français)



HÔPITAL RÉGIONAL DE
SUDBURY
REGIONAL HOSPITAL

PACEMAKER PATIENT PATHWAY



WHAT IS A PACEMAKER?

A pacemaker is a small device placed under the skin of your chest to help control abnormal heart rhythms. They are used for various reasons such as a slow heart rate, fast heart rate or irregular heart rate. Pacemakers can relieve some symptoms brought on by irregular heartbeats such as fatigue and fainting.

TYPES OF PACEMAKERS

Your doctor will decide what type of pacemaker you will need based on your heart condition and your needs.

Single Chamber: Uses one lead that usually enters into the lower chamber of the heart

Dual Chamber: Uses one lead in the upper chamber and one lead in the lower chamber of the heart.

WHO NEEDS A PACEMAKER?

Aging or heart disease can alter the normal electrical activity causing long pauses between beats or can cause your heart to alternate between fast and slow heartbeats.

Certain heart medication (beta-blockers) can slow down the heartbeats.

The electrical pathway between the upper and lower heart chambers may be partially or completely blocked. This is known as heart block.

A slow heartbeat brought on by various conditions may cause you to faint.

An irregular heartbeat called arrhythmias such as atrial fibrillation.

SHOULD I TAKE MY MEDICATION?

If you take Coumadin (Warfarin), the results of your INR test (a blood test to evaluate the blood clotting) must be within a suitable range before the implant procedure can be performed. Usually you will be instructed to stop taking aspirin or Coumadin a few days before the procedure.

Do not discontinue any of your medications without first talking with your doctor.

If you have diabetes, the nurse at the Pre-Admission Clinic will advise you as to adjusting your diabetes medications or insulin.

PRE-ADMISSION:

You will receive a call from the Pre-Admission Booking Clerk with instructions as to when you to come to the Pre-Admission Clinic for teaching and blood work (if requested by the surgeon). You will also receive an approximate date for your surgery. Your date of surgery may change depending on numerous reasons such as emergency admissions. This may be difficult for you and your family but these are not predictable factors.

THE DAY OF YOUR PROCEDURE:

1. Come to Registration/Day Surgery as instructed. This allows us enough time to prepare you for surgery.
2. In Day Surgery, the nurse will check your blood pressure, temperature and pulse. You will need to bring with you all of your pills in their original bottles.
3. You will be asked to remove **all** your clothing (including underwear), dentures, etc. and put on a hospital gown. You will **not** need to remove your hearing aid.
4. You will be given a garment bag for your belongings. It is best if your family/friend takes this bag and brings it to your room later. If no family/friend is with you, your belongings will be sent to your room while you are in surgery.
5. You will be escorted to the Operating Room where a nurse will greet you. In the operating room, the anaesthetist or nurse will start an intravenous (IV) and you will be given medication to relax you. The pacemaker site will be shaved and cleansed with an antiseptic solution. Your surgeon will freeze the area so that you will not feel any pain. You will stay awake during the surgery, but you will be comfortable.

SURGERY:

An anaesthetist or nurse will start an intravenous (IV) and you will be given medication to relax you. This medication does not put you to sleep but will relax you and make you feel drowsy. The pacemaker site will be shaved and cleansed with a cold antiseptic solution. You may be given oxygen and a drape will be placed over your chest to keep the incision area clean. You may feel a “sting” and burning from the freezing. Soon the area will become numb. You may feel a pulling sensation as the doctor makes a pocket in the tissue under your skin for the pacemaker. You may feel a cold pad placed near your thigh as well as one on your chest and back. These are placed on you while you are having surgery and will be removed immediately afterwards. When the leads are being tested, you may feel your heart rate increase or your heart beat fast. Please tell your doctor what symptoms you are feeling. You should not feel pain. If you do, tell your nurse right away.

Your incision will be approximately 5 to 8 centimetres (2 to 3 inches) long and a thick pressure dressing covering it. This dressing will be removed the next day.

Duration of Surgery:

Single Chamber: Approx. 30 minutes in the operating room

Dual Chamber: Approx. 45 minutes in the operating room

RECOVERY

If you were already in a bed on the Cardiology Unit, you will be returned to your room immediately after surgery. If you arrived by Day Surgery, you may have a wait of approximately 20 minutes in the Recovery Room while your room is being prepared.

Once in your room, your nurse will apply a heart monitor. This will remain on you until the nurse from the Pacemaker Clinic does the check the next day.

You will be allowed to eat and drink as tolerated.

You will remain **flat in bed for 24 hours**. As you are not allowed up to the bathroom, you will be given a bedpan or urinal when needed. If you have trouble urinating while lying on your back, tell your nurse.

Do NOT use your arm for 6 weeks (on the side of your pacemaker insertion) for reaching, lifting, stretching, etc; these actions may cause the pacemaker wire to move out of position.

Your surgeon will have ordered pain medication that can be give every 4 hours. If you are having pain, be sure to let your nurse know. The nurse will instruct you about restarting the medications you were taking at home.

A chest x-ray will be done the day after surgery and a nurse from the Pacemaker Clinic will come to your room to check the pacemaker and lead function.

You will have to arrange for a ride from the hospital because your doctor will not want you to drive for 4 weeks.






HOW WILL A PACEMAKER AFFECT MY LIFESTYLE?

Once you have a pacemaker, you have to avoid close or prolonged contact with electrical devices or devices that have strong magnetic fields. Devices for which close and prolonged exposure can interfere with a pacemaker include:






- o Cell phones (Bluetooth® headsets do not appear to interfere with pacemakers).
- o Earbud and clip-on types of headphones for your iPod, MP3, etc.
- o Power-generating equipment, arc welding equipment, powerful magnets.
- o Electrical generators.
- o Extracorporeal shock-wave lithotripsy – used to dissolve kidney stones.
- o MRI.
- o Radiofrequency ablation – medical procedure used to manage arrhythmias.
- o Short-wave or microwave diathermy – medical procedure for physical therapy.
- o Therapeutic radiation (for cancer treatment).
- o Transcutaneous electrical nerve stimulation (TENS) – medical device used to relieve acute or chronic pain.
- o Metal detectors for security – although unlikely to cause clinically significant symptoms, don't stay near the metal detector longer than necessary, don't lean against the system and if scanning with a hand-held metal detector, tell the security personnel that you have a pacemaker. Ask them not to hold the metal detector near the device any longer than is absolutely necessary. Or ask for an alternative form of personal search.

Anti-theft systems - although unlikely to cause clinically significant symptoms, do not lean against the system or stay near it longer than is necessary.






DAY OF ADMISSION

Consults/ Referrals	
Tests	You may have blood You may have a chest x-ray
Assessment/ Treatment 	Nursing staff will complete nursing history if not done in Pre-Admission
Medications 	Take only the medications you have been instructed to take. Bring all your pills in their original bottles when you come to Pre-admission clinic and the day of surgery.
Activity	
Nutrition/ Fluid Replacement 	Nothing to eat or drink after midnight May have clear fluids (water, apple juice etc) till 0730 hours if surgery booked after 2p.m.
Elimination	Urinate before surgery
Teaching 	Your nurse will review the information with you and answer any questions you may have. Please bring this booklet with you.
Discharge Planning 	Arrange ride to pick you up 24 hours after surgery.
Physician' s Remarks	

AFTER THE PROCEDURE

Consults/ Referrals	
Tests	
Assessment/ Treatment 	Telemetry (monitoring heart) for 24 hours. Pressure dressing for 24 hours.
Medications 	As at home
Activity	Complete bedrest-lie flat in bed for 24 hours Do not raise arm above head for 4-6 weeks May raise head of bed 30 degrees for meals
Nutrition/ Fluid Replacement 	Intravenous until drinking well, then nurse will remove. Drink and eat as tolerated.
Elimination	Bedpan/urinal for 24 hours May insert catheter if unable to urinate
Teaching 	Your nurse will review post surgery routine with you.
Discharge Planning 	Arrange for ride to pick you up 24 hours after surgery.
Physician' s Remarks	

TIME OF DISCHARGE

Consults/ Referrals	
Tests	Pacemaker check and chest x-ray 24 hours after surgery
Assessment/ Treatment 	The nurse will discontinue telemetry after pacemaker check done, remove dressing and cleanse area.
Medications 	As at home
Activity	Up as tolerated after 24 hours Do not raise arm above head for 4-6 weeks. Do not drive for 4 weeks.
Nutrition/ Fluid Replacement 	As tolerated
Elimination	
Teaching 	Your nurse will review discharge instructions with you
Discharge Planning 	Someone will need to drive you home.
Physician' s Remarks	

DISCHARGE INSTRUCTIONS

ACTIVITIES

You may move your arm although you need to avoid stretching, lifting and sudden jerky movements for 4 – 6 weeks.

Avoid activities that require pushing or pulling heavy objects, such as shovelling the snow or mowing the lawn.

Do not lift objects that weigh more than 5 kg (approx. 10 lbs) for 4 – 6 weeks.

Stop any activity before you become overtired.

For six weeks after the procedure, avoid golfing, tennis and swimming, riding ATV, snowmobiles, chopping wood.

Try to walk as much as possible for exercise.

Ask your doctor when you can resume more strenuous activities.

You will be referred to the Cardiac Rehab.

EXERCISES

Exercise your shoulders three times a day by doing the following:

- Bend your arms at the elbow, bringing fingertips towards shoulder. Keep fingers relaxed. Do not clench fist.
- Maintaining this position, bring elbows up and then draw imaginary circles in space with your elbows.



INCISION CARE

Keep the area where the pacemaker was inserted clean and dry.

Do not scrub the area.

You do not need to keep the wound covered with a bandage.

Do not use creams, lotion, or ointments on the wound site.

You may take a shower 5 days after the procedure.

Look at your wound every day to make sure it is healing. If you notice any signs of infection listed below, please call your doctor:

- Increased drainage, bleeding or oozing from the insertion site
- Increased opening of the incision
- Redness around the site
- Warmth along the site
- Increased body temperature (greater than 38.4 C or 101 F)

IDENTIFICATION CARD

Keep your pacemaker identification card with you at all times. The temporary implant card will be replaced by a permanent implant card that will come in the mail in two to three months. Please call the company if you do not receive it by that time. Numbers for the company are either in your company information book or on the back of your temporary card.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

- Refer to the company information book. It contains a wealth of information that may be useful to you in the future.
- Visit the hospital's Cardiac Care Website – www.hrsrh.on.ca
- Speak with your doctor.
- Visit your Cardiac Rehab or their satellites. For more information call Sudbury's Cardiac Rehab at 705-671-6600

FOLLOW-UP

It is important for you to attend all your follow-up appointments because adjustments will be made that will prolong the life of your pacemaker. At each appointment, the Pacemaker Clinic Nurse will check your pacemaker to make sure that it is functioning properly. Your first visit will be made between 6-12 weeks after insertion. This is to ensure that your lead has settled in properly and if required, adjustments will be made. After that, you will be seen on a regular basis according to your need.

Pacemaker batteries have to be replaced every 5 to 15 years, depending on how active your pacemaker is. Keeping your scheduled follow-up appointments is the surest way to determine when this is going to happen.

For patients not from this area and not able to travel, special arrangements can be made. Please talk to the pacemaker clinic if you are not able to attend.

Let all of your doctors, dentists and medical technicians know that you have a pacemaker.

PACEMAKER PRINT OUT

The pacemaker print-out is provided for your safety. It helps your doctor and any health care professional who may take care of you to know how your pacemaker is set for you. Please keep the print out provided in your wallet or an easily accessible place.

Please also remember to let health care professionals know that you have a pacemaker.

IDENTIFICATION BRACELETS

A Medic-Alert bracelet/pendant is also a helpful tool to keep you safe. Applications can be found at your pharmacy.

Approved:

Cardiac Patient Care Team: 13 October 2009

Critical Care Program Council: 27 November 2009

