

Patient Information Cardiology

A Guide to device implantation or generator change

Wound care

Dressings

The wound dressing should remain clean and dry and intact for 10 days. Please do not remove the dressing or touch the wound. If you do, you risk transferring germs onto the wound and getting it infected. After 10 days please remove the dressing.

Steri-Strips

Some operators use these small thin adhesive strips to help with wound healing. If there are any steri-strips they will come off by themselves once they get wet or you can take them off yourself.

Stitches

You will have absorbable stitches, which do not need removing.

Dermabond Skin Closure

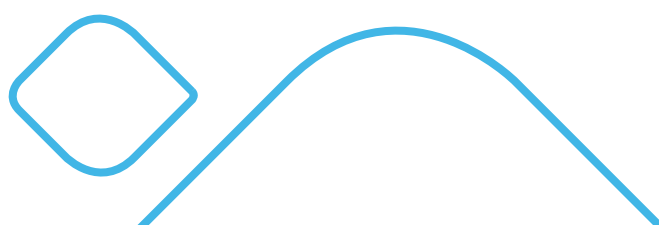
Some operators use 'Dermabond' which is a topical skin adhesive like glue. It bonds the wound edges then acts like natural skin. This should flake off by itself over the course of 10 days. Please do not pick at it or scrub it off.

Wound healing

It is normal for there to be bruising and redness around the site. This can last a couple of weeks and look quite dramatic, especially if you are on blood thinners. If you notice that this is not improving or is getting worse, please contact the RUH pacing clinic to make an appointment for a wound check.

Bleeding

Sometimes it is possible for the wound to bleed after you get home. Usually this is in the space created for the device's battery and is called a haematoma. You might notice some swelling and tenderness. This is more common in people who are on blood thinners. If you notice this, please contact the department to make an appointment for a wound check.



What to do if you think there is an infection

Please observe the wound for signs of infection. These include redness, swelling, excessive heat around the site, increasing pain and tenderness, discharge from the wound, gaping wounds or fever.

IF YOU NOTICE ANY OF THESE SIGNS PLEASE PHONE THE PACING CLINIC DURING NORMAL WORKING HOURS. IF YOU NOTICE THESE SIGNS OUT OF NORMAL OFFICE HOURS, PLEASE ATTEND YOUR NEAREST EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT.

Going Home

On the night of your procedure, you should have a restful evening. You can eat and drink as normal and sleep in your usual position. If you are a day case patient then you should have someone at home with you overnight in case of complications, although this is rare. You may experience some discomfort around the operation site during the first 24 to 48 hours. This is normal and can be managed with over-the-counter pain relief. Do not use ibuprofen or diclofenac.

Sedation

You may be offered sedation before and during your procedure. Sedation is administered intravenously through a cannula and works quickly to help you relax for the procedure. Sedation may cause side effects (e.g. drowsiness, light-headedness, nausea) though these are usually short lived.

If you are given sedation, please be aware of the following:

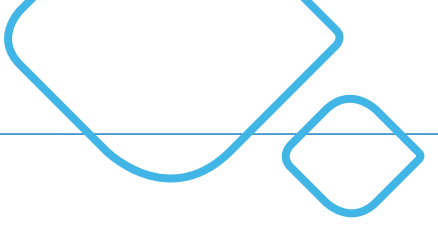
- Increased risk of falling, particularly if you are older or frail. You should have someone responsible staying with you for 24 hours after the procedure
- You cannot drive for 24 hours and will need to plan for someone to collect you (unless hospital transport is being provided)
- Avoid alcohol consumption for 24 hours after your procedure as this is likely to prolong the effects of sedation and cause you to be excessively drowsy
- Avoid making legal decisions or signing legal documentation for at least 24 hours
- Do not operate heavy machinery for at least 24 hours

The effects of sedation vary from one person to another. If you have specific questions relating to the use of sedation medications, please do not hesitate to ask your healthcare provider.

Home Monitoring

Please follow the instructions given to you by cardiac device team regarding your home monitor. If you already have your home monitor, please plug it in next to your bed when you get home.

You may have been advised to call a phone number to help with the setup of your monitor. Please do this within the first few days of getting home. Once your home monitor is connected you will receive a letter to say we have had the first download.



Travelling and your home monitor

You do not need to take your home monitor with you if you are going away less than a month. If you are going to be away for an extended period, please phone us and let us know in advance. If you are unwell whilst you are away, please seek local medical assistance

Follow-up

On the day of your procedure, you will be issued with an identity card. This has important information relevant to your device's settings. **Please always carry this with you** in case this information is needed urgently, especially when travelling. We would recommend that you make a copy of it and keep it safe.

We will arrange for you to come to the device clinic where a wound and device check will be completed. This will be about 6 weeks after your procedure. An appointment letter will be sent to you in the post. If you cannot attend this appointment, please phone the number on the letter to rearrange. You will then be advised if you need to attend for follow up appointments.

Your GP will be informed that you have had a device inserted.

Medications

Certain medications such as blood thinners may have been stopped before your procedure. The consultant supervising the procedure will decide when to restart them. The nursing staff will advise you of this before you leave the hospital. Please ask the nursing staff if you have any questions about your medications before you leave.

What to do in the first few weeks after your procedure

Physical Activity

When we implant the device leads, they take a few weeks to become embedded into the heart. For this reason, if your device is on your left side, please don't lift your left arm above your head for two weeks. If your device is on the right side, then please don't lift your right arm above your head for two weeks. You can still do normal activities like washing and dressing so that you don't get a stiff shoulder.

Please **DO NOT** lift anything heavy or take part in strenuous exercise such as swimming, tennis running or golf until your device check.

Driving

Please do not drive for at least 1 week after your device insertion. This is a **legal requirement**. If this is a new device, then we would strongly advise you not to drive until your 6-week appointment.

Under some circumstances you will need to stop driving for longer. Your consultant will advise you if this is the case.

Please tell the DVLA and your car insurance company that you have a device inserted. We can give you a proforma for this.

Equipment to avoid

Implantable devices are becoming increasingly sophisticated but there are still certain precautions you will need to take as some equipment can interfere with device's function.

Please do **tell airlines**, if flying abroad that you have a device as you will be going through a **metal detector** and the alarms may sound. This will not harm your device in anyway.

Please do not use **arc welding** equipment.

Please ensure that any **faulty electrical appliances** in your home are repaired or replaced.

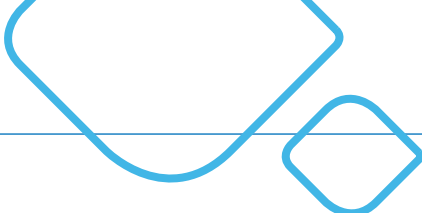
Please do not linger close to **antitheft machines** in libraries and shops. Please just walk through the entrance without stopping.

Please do not enter a **physiotherapy, radiotherapy and X-ray** area without telling the staff that you have a device implanted. In these environments some equipment may affect your device.

The use of **mobile phones** is safe, but we would advise that you do not carry your mobile phone in the breast pocket above your device.

Induction hobs. It is advised that the device is kept 60cm from the stove top. As this may be difficult to achieve, we would recommend that you avoid induction hobs.

Please discuss with the pacing department if you have a **TENS machine** or are planning to use a TENS machine.



Useful Phone numbers

Pacing clinic phone number: 01225 826548
0800-1700 Mon to Friday with limited availability over weekends.

Cardiac Day Case Unit: 01225 825394

Royal United Hospital Switchboard: 01225 428331

Useful Websites

The British heart foundation produces patient leaflets which can be found on their website:
www.bhf.org.uk

Further information can be found at Arrhythmia Alliance: www.arrhythmiaalliance.org.uk

Royal United Hospitals Bath NHS Foundation Trust
Combe Park, Bath, BA1 3NG
01225 428331 | www.ruh.nhs.uk

If you would like this leaflet in email form, large print, braille or another language, please contact the Patient Support and Complaints team on 01225 825656.