



## Implantable Cardioverter Defibrillator (ICD)

### IMPORTANT ICD INFORMATION

#### **Before You Go Home You Should Receive: Prescription for Pain Medications and Possibly Antibiotics**

- An **ICD booklet** from the electrophysiology department. This booklet contains important information for you and your family to read. This booklet will also explain how your ICD works.
- A temporary **identification card** from the ICD manufacturer will also be given to you by the electrophysiology department. We strongly recommend that you **keep this card in your purse or wallet**. It is important for all health care providers to know you have an ICD and to have access to the information on this card if needed. The ICD manufacturer will mail you a permanent plastic identification card usually one month after your surgery.
- **Prescriptions** for an antibiotic for several days and pain medication. Please verify all your medication with your doctor such as heart rhythm medication and Coumadin before going home.

#### **Care of Your Incision**

- **Leave your incision open to air.** Remove the gauze dressing the day after your surgery if it has not been done in the hospital.
- **Keep your incision clean and dry. Do NOT apply lotion or antibiotic ointments** to your incision.
- **Bathing and showering** - Your doctor may recommend one of the following options:

Option 1: You may **resume bathing or showering the day after your surgery**. Avoid allowing the shower stream to directly impact or hit your incision. You may let the soap and water gently “spill” over your incision. **Do NOT actively wash or scrub your incision until it is healed**. After bathing or showering, gently pat your incision dry with a clean towel and leave open to air.

Option 2: You may resume bathing the day after your surgery. You may **resume showering 3 days after your surgery**. **Avoid getting your incision wet until the steri-strips or staples are removed** (usually 7 to 14 days). You may temporarily cover your incision during a shower with a piece of plastic taped in place. Avoid allowing the shower stream to directly impact or hit your incision until it is healed. **Do NOT actively wash or scrub your incision until it is healed**. If your incision gets wet, gently pat it dry with a clean towel and leave open to air.



- **Avoid touching or rubbing your incision.** This will help your incision heal.
- **Do NOT remove the steri-strips** (strips of tape across the incision). They will be removed by the clinic staff at your first office visit in 7 to 14 days if they do not fall off on their own.
- If you have staples on your incision, they will be removed at your first office visit in 7 to 14 days.
- **Look at your incision daily** for several weeks as it is healing. Call the office and speak to a nurse if you experience fever, chills, increased redness, warmth, tenderness, swelling, drainage, or pain around your incision.
- Mild to moderate soreness at the ICD site or affected shoulder is not unusual. This soreness should gradually decrease over 3 or 4 weeks as it heals. Over the counter pain relievers may be taken unless otherwise ordered by your doctor.
- For women, a light gauze pad or clean powder puff placed over the incision may be more comfortable with a brassiere.

### **Activity / Exercise**

- You may gradually resume your daily activities as tolerated. This includes light to moderate exercise (such as walking) that does not excessively jar or impact your ICD.
- Avoid vigorous activity or outdoor activities that cause excessive sweating, such as yard work, for 1 week after your surgery.
- **Avoid heavy lifting for six weeks (over 10 lbs) or activities that require strenuous reaching above your head or across your shoulder.** Examples include; reaching for items on an overhead shelf, swinging a golf club, shooting a gun, swimming, gardening, and weight lifting.
- **Do not completely immobilize the affected arm and shoulder.** Use your arm to do simple activities such as eating, brushing your teeth, and combing your hair. This will prevent your shoulder from “freezing up.”
- After 6 weeks, you may resume most activities unless specifically instructed by your cardiologist.
- It is not necessary to routinely check your own pulse.



## **Things That May Affect Your ICD**

- **Avoid strong magnetic fields or electrical equipment.**
  - This includes electrical generator plant, such as, Hoover Dam, arc welders, large engines and large stereo speakers.
  - It is permissible to walk through electronic surveillance gates in department stores. Avoid lingering around these gates because they may interfere with the proper functioning of your ICD.
  - **Many types of medical tests or devices may interfere with or damage your ICD.** Examples include; **MRI scans** (magnetic resonance imaging), radiation therapy (type of cancer treatment), surgical cautery equipment (stops bleeding), lithotripsy (for kidney stones) and TENS units (pain control). Please refer to your ICD booklet or call the office for detailed information.
- **Notify all health care providers that you have an ICD.** This includes doctors, dentists, chiropractors, x-ray technicians, etc. Special arrangements may be necessary to avoid ICD interference or malfunction.
- Microwave ovens will not affect your ICD and are safe to use. Household appliances such as electric blankets, electric shavers, and hair dryers are also safe to use.
- We recommend that **if you use a cellular phone, hold it up to the ear on the opposite side of your ICD.** Do NOT carry your cell phone in a shirt pocket over your ICD.
- Your doctor may advise you to **avoid dental procedures for 3 months** after your surgery, if possible.
- In the first year after your surgery, your doctor may recommend that you **take an antibiotic pill before any dental procedure.** The dentist may prescribe the antibiotics for you or you may call the office for a prescription.
- If you have any special concerns or questions please call the office.

## **What Happens If Your Heart Goes Out of Rhythm**

- Most people can feel when their heart goes out of rhythm, but the symptoms often vary from person to person. There may be symptoms of profound dizziness, heart pounding, faintness, shortness of breath, chest pain, or vision changes. **If you suddenly experience one or more of these symptoms or if you sense something is wrong, sit down or lie down.** This will help you to prevent falling and hurting yourself.



- If your heart goes out of rhythm your ICD will detect and correct it quickly (within 10 to 12 seconds).
- Generally the ICD will do one of 3 things depending on your heart rhythm and how your doctor has “set” the ICD.
  1. If your heart goes into a rhythm that is in a “ventricular tachycardia (VT)” range, the ICD may try to pace your heart at a faster rate to get you back into normal rhythm. This does not hurt and you may or may not feel a short “fluttering sensation”.
  2. If your heart goes into a rhythm that is in a very fast “ventricular fibrillation (VF)” range, the ICD will charge up (this will take 5 to 10 seconds) and deliver a shock to your heart. That will put you back into regular rhythm. The shock will be brief, and many people describe it as “a kick in the chest”. You should feel better very quickly. There may be a residual burning feeling in your chest for a few seconds after a shock.
  3. If your heart goes into a very fast “ventricular fibrillation (VF)” and then goes back into a regular rhythm on its own, your ICD will not shock you.
- If you receive a shock and you feel fine afterwards, you do NOT need to go to an Emergency Room. Please call the office and notify us that you received a shock. Please leave a voice mail after hours and we will call you the next business day.

### **Call 911 If You:**

- **Receive 3 or more shocks within a short time period (1 -2 minutes).**
- **Do not feel well after a shock or experience shortness of breath or chest pain that does NOT stop after the shock.**
- **Experience any medical emergency.**

### **Please Call The Office If You:**

- **Receive a shock** and feel OK afterwards. The ICD / pacemaker clinic staff will speak with you or will call you the following work day if you leave a voice mail after hours.
- **Experience increased redness, warmth, tenderness, or swelling of your incision site.**
- **Experience fever or chills.**
- Have any questions or concerns regarding your ICD.



- Need to reschedule an appointment.

### **Spouse and Family Information**

- It is safe to touch or hold on to the patient while he/she receives a shock. You may feel the patient jump, but the electricity will not shock anyone else.

### **Office Visits / Appointments**

- **Taking care of your ICD requires regular office check-ups.**
- The usual schedule for your ICD check-up is:
  - First visit – 7 to 14 days after surgery
  - Second visit – 3 months after surgery
  - Then every 6 months until the ICD battery starts to show signs of depletion. Please refer to your ICD booklet for further details.
- During your first ICD check-up;
  - You will meet and have your ICD evaluated by the clinical staff. This will take approximately 20 to 30 minutes.
  - The clinical staff will examine your incision and remove the staples if present.
  - Generally, you will not be scheduled to see the physician at this visit.
- During your second ICD check-up, 3 months after your surgery;
  - The ICD / pacemaker clinical staff will evaluate your ICD.
  - You will also be examined by a physician or nurse practitioner.



- **Your ICD will be checked every 6 months after your second (3 to 4 month) visit.** The ICD/ pacemaker clinical staff will evaluate your ICD, check your blood pressure, and list your medications. You will not routinely see the physician, nurse practitioner, or nurse unless there is a heart rhythm or ICD problem. A full report of your ICD evaluation will be sent to your primary doctor.
- Patients opting for ICD checks from home will be checked every 3 months remotely, and will meet with the nurses once per year.
- When the ICD battery starts to show signs of depletion, then your evaluations will need to be more frequent, usually once a month until the battery is replaced. An ICD battery generally lasts 5 to 7 years.

### **Other Important Information**

- **Please bring all your medications with you to all office visits.** It is important for us to have accurate information regarding the medications that all of your doctors are prescribing for you.
- Please notify the office as soon as possible if you need to cancel or reschedule an appointment.

### **Useful Websites**

- [www.Medtronic.com](http://www.Medtronic.com)
- [www.Guidant.com](http://www.Guidant.com)
- [www.hrsOnline.com](http://www.hrsOnline.com)
- [www.sjm.com](http://www.sjm.com)