

Care After the Implantation of a Heart Device

You have had a:

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Loop Recorder | <input type="checkbox"/> Implantable Cardiac Defibrillator (ICD) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pacemaker | <input type="checkbox"/> Cardiac Resynchronization Therapy (CRT) |

Taking Care of Yourself at Home

For the first 24 hours

- Rest. You will be able to slowly return to your regular activities.

For the first 4 to 6 weeks

- If you need to reach above your shoulder or behind your back, **do not** use the arm on the same side as your heart device.
- Ask your doctor if you are not sure if you can do an activity. **Do not** do any activities where you are repeatedly pushing and pulling, swinging, or raising the arm on the same side as your heart device. Examples include raking, sweeping, vacuuming, reaching up over your head, playing ball, tennis, or golf.
- **Do not** lift anything heavy. This means do not lift anything more than 5 kilograms or 10 pounds. Examples include a small suitcase, a bag of groceries, or a small child.

Taking Your Medications

- Take your medications as directed. If you are not sure how to take your medications, talk to your doctor or pharmacist.
- **If you are taking a blood-thinner** (or anticoagulant medication)
- Resume taking on this date: _____
- Do not stop or change your medications without checking with your family doctor.
- If you are taking warfarin please check with your family doctor when you need your next blood test.

Managing Your Pain

You recover faster when you keep your pain under control. Do not wait until the pain is bad before you take any medicine.

Do not take ibuprofen (such as Motrin, Advil) unless your family doctor has said you can take it.

For the first 1 to 2 days:

To stay comfortable, take 1 to 2 tablets of plain acetaminophen (such as Regular Tylenol) every 4 to 6 hours. Do not take any more than a total of 4000 mg. of acetaminophen in one day.

You may find it helpful to take one of your doses before you go to bed, one again when you get up in the morning, and the remaining doses spread out over the day.

Taking these pills, even if you are not having pain at the time, helps prevent pain or keeps the pain from getting worse.

Call your family doctor if your pain does not get any better with this pain medication or your pain gets worse.

After the first 1 to 2 days:

Take plain acetaminophen (such as Regular Tylenol) only as you needed. Do not take any more than a total of 4000 mg. of acetaminophen in one day.

Call your family doctor if your pain does not get any better with this pain medication or your pain gets worse.

Follow-up Appointments

Telephone your **family doctor's office** to arrange an appointment 1 week after your procedure.

Telephone your **Cardiologist's office** to arrange to an appointment 6–8 weeks after your procedure.

An appointment has been made for you in the **Pacemaker/Device Clinic at VGH**

Not needed

Appointment Date: _____

Not needed

Appointment Date: _____

Not needed

Appointment Date: _____

Caring for Your Wound

- Do not get the dressing wet for 2 days
- Remove the outer bandage in:
 - 1 day 2 days 3 days 4 days
- If the bandage falls off, leave it off.
- After 7 days, gently remove remaining bandages.
- If you have stitches they will dissolve on their own.

Starting to Drive

For your own safety and the safety of others, you must follow the mandatory driving restrictions in the British Columbia Motor Vehicle Act.

Pacemaker: The Act says that after a pacemaker implant:

- You are not allowed to drive a private vehicle (class 5) for **1 week** after the procedure.
- You are not allowed to drive a commercial vehicle (class 1 to 4) for **1 month** after the procedure.

Defibrillator: The Act says that after a defibrillator implant:

- You are no longer allowed to drive a commercial vehicle (class 1 to 4) at any time.
- You are not allowed to drive a private vehicle (class 5) for the time listed below:
 - 1 month after prophylactic implant.
 - 3 months from the date your dangerous heart rhythm. Before driving, you must have the doctor's approval.
 - 6 months from the date your dangerous heart rhythm caused you to feel unwell, faint, or lose consciousness. Before driving again, you have the doctor's approval.

Your Heart Device Identification Card

- Always carry your heart device identification card with you.
- Before you leave the hospital, we give you a temporary heart device identification card.
- In about 6 weeks, your permanent heart device identification card is mailed to you by the heart device manufacturer.

When to Get Help

Call 9-1-1 if you notice any of the following:

- Difficulty breathing or catching your breath.
- Pain in your chest and/or shoulder that is not from your incision.
- Hiccups that do not go away.
- Bleeding that has not stopped after applying pressure for 15 minutes.

Do Not Drive Yourself to the Hospital.

Contact Your Family Doctor Right Away If:

- You still have stitches after 3 to 4 weeks.
- You notice any bruising, redness, swelling, or coloured liquid coming from the wound.
- You have a fever over 38.5°C (101.3°F).
- Your pain gets worse or does not improve with plain acetaminophen (such as Regular Tylenol).

Any Questions or Concerns

1. Call: VGH Pacemaker Clinic 604-875-4244
Monday to Friday 8:00 am–3:00 pm
2. Call your family doctor.
3. Call HealthLinkBC 8-1-1
(7-1-1 for deaf and hard of hearing) or go online to www.HealthLinkBC.ca