

Cardiology: Cardiac Pacemaker

Introduction

If your body's natural pacemaker is not working properly, you may need to have a pacemaker fitted. This might be because you have:

- Intermittent or complete heart block
- An irregular heart rate or rhythm
- A slow natural pacemaker ("sinus node disease")
- Heart failure

A pacemaker has a pulse generator (the actual pacemaker) and one, two or three electrode leads which are placed within the heart via a vein. Pacemakers with one lead are known as **single chamber** pacemakers, with two leads – **dual chamber** pacemakers, and three leads – **bi-ventricular** pacemakers.

The pacemaker has two parts: the power supply (battery) and the electronic circuit. It is sealed in metal to stop body fluids leaking in. The whole pacemaker weighs about twenty to fifty grams, and is smaller than a matchbox.

Small electrical impulses are conducted down the leads to the heart, which stimulate the heart to contract and produce a heartbeat.

A pacemaker is fitted to reduce symptoms of a slow pulse, such as dizziness or breathlessness, fatigue, or to reduce the risk of blackouts and injury

Guidance for Patients

You will be given some additional patient information before and after the procedure, for example leaflets that explain what to do after the procedure and what problems to look out for. If you have any questions or anxieties, please feel free to ask a member of staff on 01223 256233.

Further information is also available on the British Heart Foundation website: www.bhf.org.uk

How you can support yourself while you wait for your procedure

There are things you can do whilst you wait for your procedure to make you sure you are as healthy and strong as you can be. This will increase your chances of a better recovery. In the time leading up to your procedure, be sure to take good care of yourself by taking a few smart steps. This can help you avoid complications. Follow these simple tips to ensure the best possible outcome and prepare for a successful recovery.

Take Your Medication

You will be advised to continue with your normal medications, but you may be advised to stop some medications before your procedure, your clinician or pre-operative nurse will provide you with this information.

Improve Your Health

- Stick to healthy foods - Your body needs good nutrition to fight infection and heal following your procedure.
- Avoid dehydration - drink at least six-eight glasses of fluid per day, preferably water.

Alcohol

Alcohol can have many effects on your body but importantly it can reduce your body's ability to heal. Make sure you are drinking within the recommended limits or lower to improve your ability to heal after your procedure.

Prevention of Deep Vein Thrombosis (DVT) or Pulmonary Embolism (PE) before procedure

There are natural ways and lifestyle changes you can make to lower your risk of developing blood clots, these include:

- Staying active: make a point of moving every 30-60 minutes to ensure you keep your blood flowing
- Regular exercise – simply walking for 30 minutes a day is a great way to keep your circulation moving
- Maintain a healthy weight
- Keep hydrated.

What should I do if my health is deteriorating?

If you feel that there is a change in your condition, please contact your Clinical Team, via switchboard (01223 245 151)

Urgent Health Advice

For urgent health advice about physical or mental health, when it's not an emergency, please call 111 from any landline or mobile phone. The NHS 111 service is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. You can also visit www.nhs.uk

Life Threatening Emergencies

For something life threatening – severe bleeding, breathing difficulties or chest pains – please dial 999.

Contact Us

Please call ward K2 on telephone number 01223 256233 if you have any questions or concerns about this procedure or your appointment.