

If you have any questions or concerns, please ask your health care provider.

Understanding Your ICD

Your doctor has discussed the need for an Implantable Cardioverter Defibrillator (ICD) with you. The purpose of this brochure is to explain:

- What an ICD is.
- How it can help you.
- Needed follow-up after placement.

You can also find a video about ICDs on the hospital Patient Education Television. Ask your nurse for details.

The ICD is a device that can protect you against dangerous abnormal heart rhythms by constantly monitoring your heart rhythm. The ICD is able to detect ventricular tachycardia (VT) or ventricular fibrillation (VF). These two heart rhythms can be life-threatening if they are not treated. The ICD treats these rhythms by pacing or shocking the heart back to a normal rhythm. The ICD can also act as a pacemaker. Your doctor will program your ICD to best fit your specific needs.

ICD Placement

The ICD placement is done in the Electrophysiology (EP) Lab. You will be given sedation to help you relax during the procedure. The procedure lasts several hours. Most patients are able to go home the next morning.

After Your Discharge

At home you will need time to recover from the surgery. It is important for you to listen to your body and rest when you feel tired. Eat a proper diet. Follow up with your doctor for scheduled appointments.

Incision Care

- Do not shower or get the wound bandage wet until after the wound check appointment 1 week after surgery.
- When you have permission to shower, you may get the incision wet. Let the water, soap and shampoo trickle over the incision. Do not scrub the incision or the area around it. Pat the incision dry.
- Do not take a bath or submerge the incision in water for 6 weeks.
- Do not place any lotions, creams, or gel over the incision.

- Do not raise your affected arm over your head for the next 6 weeks. The height of your shoulder is the maximum level the arm can be raised. You may use your affected arm for everyday activities.
- Steri-Strips™, the clear strips of tape covering your wound, can be removed 1 week after your wound check appointment.
- Protect your incisions from the sun to avoid sunburn and decrease scarring.

Activity Guidelines

- Driving is not allowed for 1 week to 6 months after your ICD is implanted. This is a topic of concern for most patients. However, it is important to know that you have a heart rhythm that can make you dizzy, faint or even pass out. If you are driving a car when this happens you could injure yourself or others on the road. The ICD is able to treat the abnormal heart rhythm, not prevent it from happening.
- Do not raise your affected arm over your head for the next 6 weeks. The height of your shoulder is the maximum level the arm can be raised. You may use your affected arm for everyday activities. A sling is not recommended for your recovery time.
- Exercise is encouraged. It is important to start slowly and progress gradually. Be sure to rest when you are tired. There are many benefits to a regular exercise program. Talk with your doctor to see what options are best for you.
- Do not use exercise machines with moving arms for the next 6 weeks.
- Avoid exercise or activity that could result in blunt blows to the pacemaker site, such as contact sports.
- Do not lift anything over 10 lbs. (such as groceries, laundry, children) until 6 weeks after surgery.
- You should avoid activities involving stretching and/or reaching movements with your affected arm (such as golf or tennis) for 6 weeks after your surgery.
- Do not go swimming or use whirlpools for 6 weeks until the incision is completely healed to decrease the risk of infections.
- Avoid dental work for 3 months after the implant.

When to Call the Doctor

Notify your surgeon if you develop any of these signs of infection:

- Fever greater than 100° F.
- Redness, swelling or tenderness at the incision site.
- Drainage from the incision site.

As noted before, your ICD may attempt to pace you out of an abnormal rhythm. If unsuccessful it will deliver a shock to restore your normal rhythm.

If you receive a shock and feel fine:

- You may want to sit and rest for a few minutes.
- Notify us at the Device Clinic when you have time at 312.695.1926 during regular business hours.

If you receive a shock and pass out or do not feel well:

- **Call 911 or your local emergency number.**
- Once transferred to an emergency department, notify us at the Device Clinic at 312.695.1926.

Follow-up Care and Appointments

After your ICD is implanted, you will be followed closely by the Device Clinic to assure that it is working properly. Part of your follow-up involves checking the battery life and function of your device.

Appointments

It is very important that you keep your appointments. The Device Clinic is located at:

675 North Saint Clair Street
19th Floor, Suite 100
Phone 312.695.1926

1 week after your surgery

You will need to come back to the Device Clinic for a wound check. Your wound check appointment is:

After this visit, you will be seen again in **3 months**. Then you will begin remote home monitoring. A remote transmission will be completed every 3 months for the next year. You will then return to the Device Clinic **once a year for an annual exam**.

Living with Your ICD

Magnets and Electrical Devices

Keep your device at least 6 inches away from all things magnetic. Normal use of properly operating household appliances should not damage your ICD. Microwave ovens and cell phones are safe to use. However, do not carry your cell phone in your shirt pocket over your device. When talking on the cell phone, hold it in the ear on the opposite side of your device.

Using electric arc welders or working on automobile ignition systems also will not damage your ICD. But, they can interfere with the ICD function. Confirm the safety of the indicated items. Individual situations may vary. If in doubt, your home or work area can be checked for interference with your device by consultants (ask the Device Clinic nurse for details).

You may have X-rays and CT exams. You cannot have an MRI test. If you need an MRI, please contact the Device Clinic for the clearance process. Dental equipment is safe with a few exceptions. Notify your dentist about your ICD before any procedure is performed.

Metal detectors at the airport or at Federal buildings will not hurt your device, but they may alarm when you pass through them. Hand held wands should be avoided. You will need to present your device ID card, let security know you have an implanted device, and security will do a hand pat-down.

Your Device

You have been implanted with a _____.

The company's phone number is _____.

You should receive a temporary ID card from your device company. You will receive a permanent ID card in the mail 3 to 4 weeks after your procedure. ***Carry this ID card with you at all times.***

If you have any specific questions about your device, please contact the device company.

It is important to notify all of your doctors that you have an ICD. If there are any questions concerning your ICD and specific tests you need, we can provide you with further information.

For any questions or concerns about your ICD, feel free to call the ***Device Clinic nurse at 312.695.1926.***

Northwestern Medicine – Health Information Resources

For more information, contact Northwestern Memorial Hospital's Alberto Culver Health Learning Center (HLC) at hlc@nm.org, or by calling 312.926.5465. You may also visit the HLC on the 3rd floor, Galter Pavilion at 251 E. Huron St., Chicago, IL. Health information professionals can help you find the information you need and provide you with personal support at no charge.

For more information about Northwestern Medicine, please visit our website at nm.org.

Para asistencia en español, por favor llamar al Departamento de Representantes para Pacientes al 312.926.3112.

The entities that come together as Northwestern Medicine are committed to representing the communities we serve, fostering a culture of inclusion, delivering culturally competent care, providing access to treatment and programs in a nondiscriminatory manner and eliminating healthcare disparities. For questions, please call either Northwestern Memorial Hospital's Patient Representatives Department at 312.926.3112, TDD/TTY 312.926.6363 or the Northwestern Medical Group Patient Representatives Department at 312.695.1100, TDD/TTY 312.926.6363.

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