

# How to Care for Yourself after Defibrillator (ICD) Insertion

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## **When do I need to get emergency care?**

Call 911 immediately if you develop:

- Sudden chest pain
- Shortness of breath
- Sudden confusion or trouble speaking or understanding speech
- Sudden trouble seeing in one or both eyes
- Sudden numbness or weakness of face, arm, or leg, especially on one side of your body
- Sudden trouble walking, dizziness, loss of balance or coordination
- Sudden or severe headache with no known cause
- Nausea with uncontrolled vomiting
- Severe bleeding

## **What symptoms are considered urgent?**

Call us if you have any of these urgent symptoms:

- Fever of 100.5° F or more
- Bleeding that does not stop or gets worse
- Bruising that gets bigger or more painful
- Redness, swelling, warmth, or bad-smelling drainage near the procedure site
- Increasing discomfort, or discomfort that spreads to the arm on the same side of your body as your device
- Swelling that gets worse or more painful, or if your hand or arm on the same side as the device swells
- New and significant irregular heartbeats (arrhythmias) or palpitations

## **What do I need to do if my ICD beeps or vibrates?**

Some strong magnetic fields may cause your device to beep (Medtronic and Boston Scientific devices) or vibrate (Abbott devices). **If you hear a beeping alarm or feel a vibration** do the following:

- Immediately move away from the object that may be causing the beeping tone.
- Call the Device Nurses to report the beeping tones/vibration **(888) 287-1082**.

Depending on the manufacturer and/or the programming of your device, your device may beep or vibrate. This may occur when the battery power is low, lead impedances are out of range or for other reasons. **If the beeping/vibrating alarm turns on** do the following:

- Record the time you heard the beeping tones/vibration.
- Call the Device Nurse at **(888) 287-1082**. The nurse will coordinate a clinic visit so we can check your device or download a report if you have a remote monitoring system.

## **What should I do if I receive a shock from my ICD?**

If you do receive a shock:

- **Call 911** if you feel dizzy, lightheaded, short of breath, have chest pain, or lose consciousness.
- If you do not have any of these symptoms follow these instructions:
  - Record the following information:
    - Date
    - Time
    - What you were doing right before the shock
    - Symptoms you noticed before the shock
  - If you have a home monitoring system, please call the device nurses who will instruct you on how to download a report.

It is not necessary to call after receiving a shock as long as you feel fine, but please feel free to call us. You may feel upset when you receive the first shock from your ICD. Because the shock can be unexpected, it is only natural to feel anxious for a little while.

### **What should I do if I receive multiple shocks from my ICD?**

- If you receive more than (1) shock in one day or (3) or more shocks in one week, follow the steps below:
  - **Call 911** if you feel dizzy, lightheaded, short of breath, have chest pain, or lose consciousness.
  - If you **do not** have any of these symptoms call to speak to a Device Clinic Nurse or the Electrophysiology (EP) Fellow on call.
- You may be scheduled for a clinic visit to look at your device or you may be instructed to download a report if you have a home monitoring system.
- Call your primary heart doctor. You may need to have blood drawn to determine if you need changes made to your medications.

### **What should I do if I have symptoms and do not receive a shock from my ICD?**

It is possible for you to feel symptoms but not receive a shock from your ICD. Your doctor will program your device to meet your needs. The type of therapy you receive and when you receive it is based on these programmed settings.

Things to consider:

- An abnormal heart rhythm may cause symptoms that your ICD system is not programmed to treat.
- If symptoms are severe or continue for more than a minute, you should seek immediate medical attention.
- Sometimes exercise or activity may cause shortness of breath, dizziness, or lightheadedness.

## What is the number to call?

Please use the numbers below based on your medical needs or questions.

Medical emergencies	
Examples:	Number to call:
You have an emergency, and you need immediate medical help.	<b>911</b>

Urgent concerns	
Examples:	Number to call:
<p>You have urgent arrhythmia or device-related issues that should be addressed quickly, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• New urgent symptoms</li><li>• Urgent medication or device concerns</li></ul>	<p>On Monday through Friday from 8:00 AM – 5:00 PM: Call the FCVC Call Center at <b>(844) 369-7816, option 1</b></p> <p>After 5:00 PM or on weekends and holidays: Call Hospital Paging at <b>(734) 936-6267</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ask to speak with the electrophysiology (EP) fellow on call. Be sure to stay by your phone for a call back.</li><li>• Please use this service only for urgent arrhythmia or device-related matters that cannot wait until the next business day.</li></ul>

<b>Non-urgent concerns</b>	
<b>Examples:</b>	<b>Number to call:</b>
<p>You have questions or non-urgent needs about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Medications or devices</li> <li>• Prescription refills or prior authorizations</li> <li>• Not being able to go for your scheduled blood work</li> <li>• Scheduling, canceling, or confirming an appointment</li> </ul>	<p><b>(844) 369-7816, option 1</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ask to speak with a Device Clinic nurse.</li> <li>• Call between 8:00 AM – 5:00 PM Monday through Friday.</li> </ul>
You need to fax forms for a provider signature (disability, insurance, work, etc.).	Send fax to <b>(734) 998-2324</b>
You have questions about the home monitoring program or issues with your home monitor.	<p><b>(866) 292-0003</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Call between 8:00 AM – 5:00 PM Monday through Friday.</li> </ul>
You want to schedule an electrophysiology procedure.	<p><b>(734) 936-5617</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Call between 8:00 AM – 5:00 PM Monday through Friday.</li> </ul>
You have questions about billing and insurance.	<p><b>(855) 855-0863</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Call between 8:00 AM – 4:00 PM Monday through Friday.</li> </ul>

## What can I expect at my procedure site?

Symptoms:	Call your doctor if:
<b>Bleeding:</b> There may be a few drops of blood from the site. There may also be bruising.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Your bleeding does not stop or if it increases.</li> <li>Your bruising increases or becomes more painful.</li> </ul>
<b>Tenderness, discomfort, or pain:</b> There may be some discomfort around your site. This should improve over several days.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The discomfort increases.</li> <li>The discomfort extends to the arm on the same side of the device.</li> </ul>
<b>Swelling:</b> There may be slight swelling over the site. This should slowly improve over several days.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The swelling increases or becomes painful.</li> <li>The hand or arm on the same side as the device is swelling.</li> </ul>
<b>Signs of infection:</b> There should not be any signs of infection after your procedures.	<p>You have signs of infection near the site, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Redness</li> <li>Swelling</li> <li>Skin feels hot to the touch</li> <li>Drainage</li> </ul>
<b>Rash:</b> There should not be a rash on your body.	You notice a rash.

## How can I take care of my procedure site?

- Do not swim or put your **incision** (the cut made during your procedure) under water until you have seen your doctor for a follow-up visit 7-10 days after your procedure. This includes pools, hot tubs, and tub baths.
- Keep the procedure site and dressing clean and dry for 48 hours after your procedure. After 48 hours, you may remove the dressing and shower.
- Avoid spraying water directly on your incision while showering.
- Wash your incision with your usual bath soap and water every day. Do not scrub your incision.

- After washing, pat the incision site dry and leave it open to the air (do not cover it).
- Use a freshly laundered washcloth and towel each time you shower.
- Do not put any creams, lotions, powders, or ointments on your incision.

## **How will I manage my pain at home?**

It's normal to have pain for the first 24-48 hours after your procedure, and everyone feels pain differently. We will work closely with you to create a plan for managing your pain after your procedure.

## **What can I do to manage pain without medications?**

Here are a few tips to help with pain relief. Ask your provider for more specific instructions for your care after your procedure.

- Use a dry, cold compress (like an ice pack).
- Follow the activity instructions (listed later in this handout).
- Use activities to distract you from pain, such as guided imagery, listening to soft music, or meditation.
- Get enough rest. If you are having trouble sleeping, talk with your provider.
- Use pillows for support when you sleep.
- Change your position in bed.

## **How will I use over-the-counter medication to relieve pain?**

- Ask your provider **if it is okay** to use over-the-counter acetaminophen (Tylenol®) or ibuprofen (Motrin®, Advil®).
- You can take pain medication before activity.

## **What if my provider prescribes an opioid pain medication?**

We may give you a prescription for strong pain medication (opioids) to take at home. We are careful about using opioid pain medications after a procedure because they can be addictive, may cause you harm, and can lead to overdose if they are used incorrectly or abused. Michigan law now limits opioid prescriptions for pain treatment after a procedure to no more than 7 days.

### **What if I still have pain?**

Please call our team if you have any questions, problems or if you are still experiencing pain after 7 days.

### **What are my activity instructions?**

- Do not lift any objects weighing more than 15 pounds with the arm on the same side of your body as your device (called the **affected arm**) until the follow-up visit 7-10 days after your procedure.
  - If you had a generator (battery) change, you do not need to follow this lifting restriction, but you should listen to your body and stop if you experience pain or discomfort.
- You can move your affected arm normally, but you should listen to your body and stop if you experience pain or discomfort.
- If you need work restrictions, we will talk with you more about this at your follow-up visit.
- If you were given a medication to make you sleep or prevent you from feeling pain during your procedure, avoid these activities for 24 hours after your procedure:
  - Driving
  - Operating heavy machinery
  - Using power tools
  - Cooking
  - All other activities that make you breathe hard or increase your heart rate
  - Making important or complex decisions
  - Drinking alcohol
- For your safety, have a family member or friend stay with you for the first 24 hours after your procedure.
- **Driving:** Your doctor might advise you not to drive for 6 months, depending on your condition. Please discuss your ability to drive at your next clinic visit.



## What are my diet instructions?

You can return to eating and drinking normally after your procedure.

## What should I do for follow-up care?

- We will need to check your incision in the Device Clinic 7-10 days after your procedure. **We will send you a letter in the mail or in the online patient portal ([MyUofMHealth.org](https://myuofmhealth.org)) with the date and time of your appointment.** If you do not receive appointment information within 5 days, call (888) 287-1082 to make an appointment with the Device Clinic.
- You will have Device Clinic appointments on a regular basis to check the function of your device. Most devices have the ability to send information through the telephone or by remote monitoring. Ask about this feature during your clinic appointment.

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Authors: Laura Horwood, NP, Helen McFarland, BSN  
Reviewer: Bethany Lee-Lehner, RN MSN  
Edited by: Brittany Batell, MPH MSW CHES®  
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