

How to Care for Yourself after Defibrillator (ICD) Insertion

When do I need to seek emergency care?

Call 9-1-1 **immediately** if you develop:

- Sudden onset of 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

When do I need to seek medical attention?

Call us if you develop any of the following signs or symptoms:

- Fever of 100.5F or more
- Bleeding that does not stop or increases
- Bruising that increases or becomes more painful
- Redness, swelling, heat or foul smelling drainage near the procedure site
- Discomfort that increases or extends to the arm on the same side of the device
- Swelling increases or becomes painful, or if the hand or arm on the same side as the device is swelling
- Dizziness
- Irregular heartbeats (heart palpitations)
- Any unusual occurrence that causes you concern

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 the Electrophysiology Service/ Device Nurse or 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?

Call us at **1-888-287-1082** Monday through Friday 8 am to 5 pm and ask for the Device Clinic Nurse.

- **After 5 pm or on weekends or holidays** call (734) 936-6267 and ask to speak with the Electrophysiology (EP) Fellow On Call.
- If you cannot reach medical assistance by phone, **call 9-1-1.**

What can I expect at my procedure site?

You can expect the following:	Call your doctor if:
Bleeding - there may be a few drops of blood from the site. There may also be bruising.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bleeding does not stop or if it increases. • Bruising increases or becomes more painful.
Tenderness, discomfort or pain - there may be some discomfort in the area of the incision. This should improve over several days.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The discomfort increases. • The discomfort extends to the arm on the same side of the device.
Swelling - there may be slight swelling over the insertion site. This should gradually improve over several days.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The swelling increases or becomes painful. • The hand or arm on the same side as the device is swelling.
Signs of infection - there should not be any signs of infection after your operation.	Have signs of infection around the incision, such as <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Redness • Swelling • Skin feels hot to the touch • Drainage
Rash - there should not be a rash on your body.	You notice a rash.

How will I take care of my procedure site?

- Do not swim or put your incision under water until you have seen your doctor for a wound check 7-10 days after your procedure. This includes pools, hot tubs and tub baths.
- Keep area with 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.
- Pat the incision site dry with a clean towel.

What are my activity instructions?

- Do not lift any objects weighing more than 15 pounds with your affected arm until the wound check in 7-10 days after your procedure.
 - **Exception:** there are no weight restrictions for a generator (battery) change but you should listen to your body and stop if you experience pain or discomfort.
- You can move your affected arm normally but should listen to your body and stop if you experience pain or discomfort. The “**affected**” arm is the arm on the same side as your device. If your device is on the right side, then your “affected” arm is your right arm.
- If you received a sedative or an opioid pain medication during your procedure **avoid the following** activities for 24 hours after your procedure or until you stop taking pain medication:
 - Driving
 - Operating heavy machinery
 - Using power tools
 - Cooking
 - All other strenuous activities
 - Do not make important or complex decision
 - Do not drink alcohol

For your safety have a family member, friend or attendant stay with you for the first 24 hours.

- **Driving-** Your doctor may recommend no driving for a period of 6 months depending on your condition. Talk to your doctor about driving at your follow up clinic visit.
- If you require work restrictions, this will be further discussed at your 7-10 day follow up clinic visit.

What are my diet instructions?

You may resume your previous diet.

What is my follow up care?

We will need to check your device and incision in the device clinic 7 - 10 days after your procedure. You will receive a **notification in the mail or in the patient portal** with the date and time of your appointment. If you do not receive appointment information within 5 days, call **1-888-287-1082** 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 transmit information through the telephone or by remote monitoring. Ask about this feature during your clinic appointment.

Our Device Clinic Nurses and Technicians follow-up with you as well. They are also a good source of support and information. They welcome your questions.

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