

# Living with an ICD: How to Respond to ICD Shock

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It is possible that you will experience a shock at some point after having an ICD placed. As an ICD patient, you cannot control shocks, but you can have a plan for how to respond. Although shocks are often startling and uncomfortable, they are also a sign that your ICD is doing its job, protecting you from life-threatening arrhythmias or a rapid heart rate. Having a plan for shock helps reduce uncertainty and anxiety, so that you and your loved ones know what actions to take.

## **How do I prepare for a shock?**

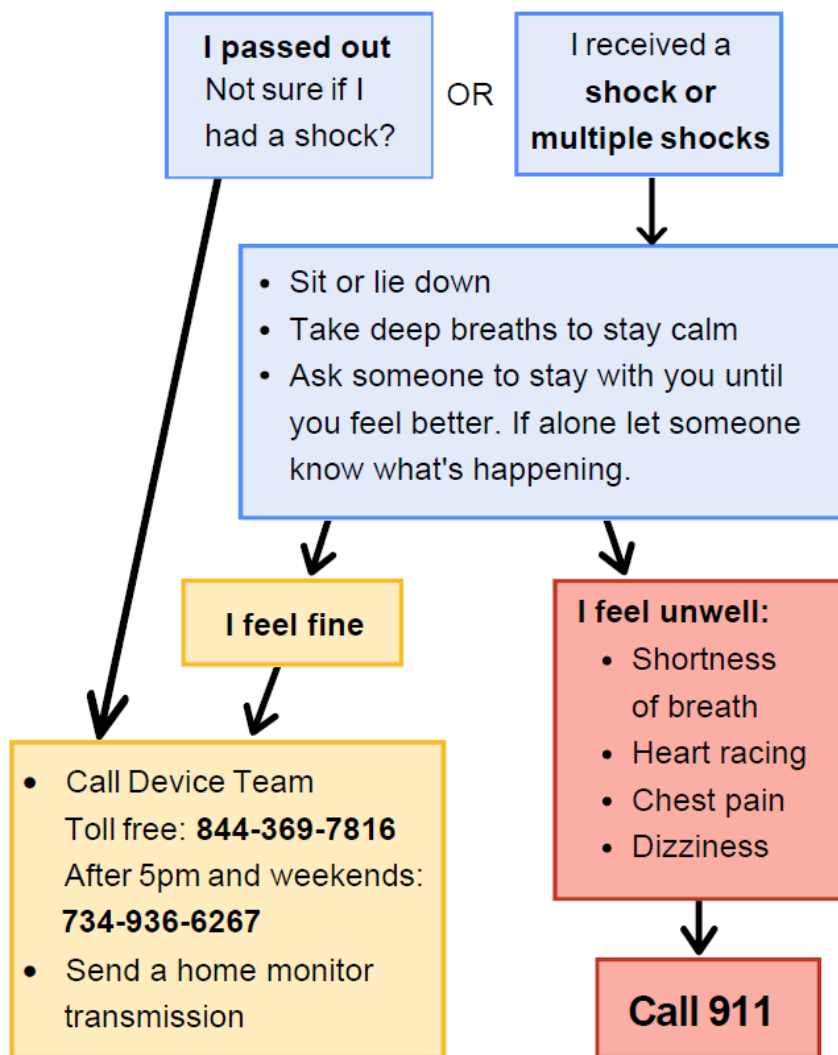
- Always carry your identification card. In an emergency, this card tells the people helping you that you have an ICD.
- Review your shock plan so you know what to do.
- Pay attention to how you feel and be able to identify symptoms that might trigger a shock. If you notice symptoms, sit down or pull over if you are driving.
- Keep your phone charged and within arm's reach at all times in case you need to call 911.
- Let your family or friends know where you are, where you plan to go and when you'll be back.
- When traveling, choose places near a hospital for easy access to medical care if necessary.

## **What does it feel like to receive a shock?**

Some people say an ICD shock feels like being hit hard in the back with a baseball bat. Others say it feels like being kicked by a horse. They rate the pain

they experience a “6” on a “0 to 10” pain scale. The pain usually lasts only for a second. Most people feel it more in their back.

### What do I do if my ICD gives me a shock?



### Can I still drive a car if I have received a shock or passed out?

- If the Device Team tells you to go to the Emergency Department or you are feeling unwell, you should call for a ride. **Do not** drive yourself.
- The State of Michigan prohibits driving for a person who passed out.
- Talk to your provider if you are not sure if it is safe for you to drive.

## What if I have symptoms but don't receive a shock?

Sometimes you may have symptoms like shortness of breath, heart racing, chest pain, or dizziness and not get shocked. Here's what to do:

- Call the device team at **(844) 369-7816**
- After 5pm, weekends or holidays call Hospital Paging at **(734) 936-6267**
  - Ask to speak with the electrophysiology (EP) fellow on call. Be sure to stay by your phone for a call back.
  - Please use this service only for urgent arrhythmia or device-related matters that cannot wait until the next business day.
- Send a home monitor transmission

## What questions will the device team ask when I call?

When you call, your team may ask about any changes in your medication or medical history. Be prepared with this information to assist them.

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