

# How to Care for Yourself After Pacemaker 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 your face, arm, or leg, especially on one side of your body
- Sudden trouble walking, dizziness, or 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 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>

## **How do I get support from my device company?**

If you need help with your home monitoring device, please contact your device company's technical support team. Here is the contact information for different heart device companies:

Company	For general device information:	For home monitoring support:	Website
Boston Scientific (formerly Guidant)	(866) 484-3268	(866) 484-3268	<a href="http://BostonScientific.com">BostonScientific.com</a>
Medtronic, Inc.	(800) 551-5544	(800) 929-4043	<a href="http://Medtronic.com">Medtronic.com</a>
Biotronik, Inc.	(800) 547-0394	(800) 547-0394	<a href="http://Biotronik.com">Biotronik.com</a>
Abbott (formerly St. Jude Medical)	(800) 722-3423	(877) 696-3754	<a href="http://SJM.com">SJM.com</a>

### 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>

Symptoms:	Call your doctor if:
<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 (non-prescription) medication for pain control?**

- Ask your provider if it is okay for you to use over-the-counter acetaminophen (Tylenol®) or ibuprofen (Motrin® or 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 or problems, or if you are still experiencing pain 7 days after your procedure.

#### **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.

### **What are my eating and drinking 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](http://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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