

Guide to Implantable Cardioverter Defibrillator (ICD) Implantation

An ICD is an implantable device that delivers electrical impulses to regulate a heart rate that is too fast, too slow, or irregular. Implantation of an implantable cardioverter defibrillator (ICD) requires an overnight hospital stay. Patients may have undergone a diagnostic EP study the previous day and already will be hospitalized.

Preparing for an ICD Implant

- Do not eat any food or drink any fluids after midnight the day before your test.
- Anticipate that the entire procedure will take to 90 minutes.

During The Procedure

- One of our nurses will take you to a pre-operative room. A physician or nurse practitioner will discuss the procedure with you and will review your medical history.
- If you are a woman of childbearing age, a urine pregnancy test will be performed.
- You will be asked to sign a consent form.
- After you change into a hospital gown, an intravenous line (IV) will be placed in your forearm, a blood pressure monitor will be placed on your arm, and ECG stickers will be placed on your chest to monitor your heart's rhythm. Large sticky patches will be placed on your chest and back.
- While you are in a comfortable upward position, the nurses will clean your upper chest with sterile soap. A sterile drape will be positioned from your chin to your toes.
- You then will be given sedating medication through your IV. Local anesthesia will be injected under the skin where the pacemaker will be placed.
- During the surgery you will be drowsy. You will be given medication to prevent any discomfort.
- Once the procedure is complete, you will be taken to your hospital room or the recovery room.

After the Procedure

- The arm on the side of your pacemaker implantation will be immobilized in a sling overnight.
- You may eat as soon as you are awake following the procedure.
- A chest X-ray will be taken once you arrive in your room, and before you leave the hospital the following morning.
- A nurse practitioner will come to your room and discuss your discharge and follow-up instructions.
- You will receive a temporary identification card for your new ICD. This card has vital information and you should carry it at all times. The ICD company will mail you a permanent card within a few weeks of your surgery.
- An antibiotic will be prescribed for you to take for several days following surgery.

After You Go Home

- Refrain from heavy lifting (no more than 10 pounds), lifting above your head, stretching, or vigorous activity with your affected arm for one month after the procedure.

- Most often, a surgical adhesive is used over the wound. If this is the case, you may shower the next day.
- Before your follow-up appointment, if you develop any fever, bleeding, swelling, severe pain in the area of the incision, palpitations, or fainting spells, please call our office immediately at (212) 746-2158. A physician is available at all times.
- At your one-week follow-up, a nurse practitioner or clinical nurse specialist will evaluate your ICD at the Device Clinic. Please bring a list of your medications.

Frequently Asked Questions about ICD Implants

What if someone is touching me when the ICD delivers a shock?

The ICD will not cause any harm to a person who is touching you when it delivers a shock.

Can I use a microwave oven?

Yes. Modern ICD technology and current well-insulated microwave ovens do not interfere with each other.

Can I use a cell phone?

Yes. It is recommended that you do not leave the phone turned on and in your breast pocket. As long as you follow these instructions and use the phone on the ear opposite the ICD, there should be no interference.

May I have an MRI scan?

An MRI, or magnetic resonance imaging, scan utilizes powerful magnets to obtain images of body structures, but without using X-rays. The powerful magnets of MRI scanners have been associated with interference with ICD function. Therefore, patients with ICDs should talk to their implanting physicians if an MRI is recommended.

May I swim and/or play golf?

Yes, but you must wait four weeks after implantation of your ICD.

Can I travel?

Yes. You will be free to travel once you have recovered from surgery. Be sure to bring your ICD identification card with you. If you plan to be away for more than 3 months, you may need to make arrangements with your doctor to have the ICD monitored remotely.

✉ Contact

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