



## PACEMAKER DISCHARGE INSTRUCTIONS

### IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS

Cardiologist: \_\_\_\_\_

Electrophysiologist: \_\_\_\_\_

Device Service Secretary: **434-924-9527, Monday- Friday, 8am-5pm.**

Daytime Emergency Number: **434-924-0000. Ask for the on call RN on pager # 1502.**

Evening and Weekend  
Emergency Number: **434-924-0000, ask the operator to page the Doctor on call  
for the Electrophysiology Service.**

### FOLLOW-UP APPOINTMENTS:

- You will be scheduled to be seen in the Device Clinic in 2 weeks, and again at 3 months from the time of your pacemaker implant.
- Please bring a current list of your medications to each visit.
- During the follow-up visit we will examine your incision site, and assess the pacemaker function.
- At the 3 month visit we will set you up with equipment that will allow you to check the pacemaker over the telephone, you will be seen in Device Clinic yearly after the 3 month visit.

### INCISION CARE

- The original dressing will be removed the day after implant of the pacemaker. It will be replaced with another dressing that you should remove within 1 day after discharge. Leave the incision open to the air after this point.
- Do NOT get the incision area wet for 3 days.
- You may shower after 3 days
- You may take a tub bath the first day at home as long as you do NOT submerge your incision under the water.
- If the doctor put steri-strips ( thin strips of paper tape) over the incision, you may wash over these, but do not remove them. They will be removed at the 2 week follow-up visit.
- If the doctor used staples to close your incision, they will be removed at the time of your 2 week follow-up visit.
- Do not manipulate, rub, or put any ointments or salves on the incision.
- Wash over the incision site gently with soap and water only.
- If you find that your clothing irritates the incision, a dressing or light pad may be worn over the incision site.
- You may experience some discomfort, tenderness, and bruising around the incision site. This discomfort should get better with time. You may take non-aspirin pain relievers containing acetaminophen ( Tylenol) in the recommended dose.

### INFECTION AND BRUISING

- Signs and symptoms of infection are redness, increasing pain, swelling, drainage, and bleeding. Notify the Device Service if these symptoms occur or if you develop a temperature > 100.4 F.
- Some bruising around the device site is normal. If you develop a large amount of bruising, or the area becomes swollen, please notify the Device Service.
- Please do NOT take any antibiotics for your incision unless you have checked with your pacemaker doctor first.
- If you are scheduled to have a dental procedure done ( even a cleaning) within **the first 3 months** of your pacemaker implant you will need to have your dentist prescribe a prophylactic antibiotic prior to the procedure.

## **PACEMAKER PROBLEMS**

- Signs of a problem with the pacemaker may present as rhythmic hiccupping, fainting, dizziness, weakness, or return of the symptoms you felt prior to having the pacemaker implanted. Contact the Device Service if you experience any of these symptoms.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL HAZARDS**

Certain machines or appliances create electrical or magnetic fields that can interfere with your pacemaker function.

### **Home Hazards:**

- Household appliances will not interfere with your pacemaker as long as they are grounded and in good working order.
- Microwave ovens are NOT a hazard if they are newer than 15 years old.
- When using a cellular phone, hold it to the ear opposite from the pacemaker. Carry the phone on the side away from your pacemaker. Never carry it in a chest pocket, even when it is turned off.
- Avoid standing in the entryway of a store with shoplifting detectors. However walking past such equipment at a normal pace will not interfere with the function of your pacemaker.
- You may stand next to a running car engine but don't lean over one.

### **Airport Security:**

- Airport metal detectors may detect your pacemaker, but they will not harm the pacemaker.
- You may need to show security personnel your identification card.
- Hand-held security scanning devices may be passed over the pacemaker, but they should not be held in place over it.

## **MAKE SURE YOUR DOCTOR KNOWS THAT YOU HAVE A PACEMAKER IF YOU ARE SCHEDULED FOR ANY OF THE FOLLOWING PROCEDURES OR TESTS:**

- MRI x-ray. You should NEVER have an MRI done due to the large magnetic field it creates.
- Radiation Therapy
- Diathermy
- Electrocautery (used in most surgical procedures)
- Lithotripsy
- Transcutaneous electric nerve stimulator (TENS unit)

Contact your pacemaker doctor if there are any questions regarding these procedures.

Please notify the Device Service if you are scheduled for surgery.

## **ALWAYS CARRY YOUR PACEMAKER IDENTIFICATION CARD WITH YOU**

We recommend that you get a medical alert bracelet or necklace.

## **ACTIVITIES AFTER YOUR PACEMAKER IMPLANT**

- Your arm or shoulder may be sore for up to 2 weeks or more.
- Do NOT raise your arm up over your head for 7 days after surgery, but do move it back and forth at the level of your shoulder during that time to avoid frozen shoulder muscles from developing. After that you may move your arm freely.
- Avoid lifting heavy weights ( anything weighing more than 10 lbs) for 4 weeks.
- You should avoid vigorous activities that involve bouncing (running, horseback riding, contact sports, etc.) or vigorous arm exercises (golfing, swimming, vacuuming, sweeping, gardening) for 2 months after your pacemaker implant. This will allow the lead(s) to attach securely within the heart chambers.
- You may drive in 7 days. There may be specific driving restrictions depending on your health situation. If your healthcare provider advises you not to drive, please follow that advice.