

## Advice for patients with recently implanted pacemakers

### Other formats

If you need this information in another format such as audio tape or computer disk, Braille, large print, high contrast, British Sign Language or translated into another language, please telephone the PALS desk on 01271 314090.

This leaflet is intended to help in the early recovery of people who have recently had a heart pacemaker fitted, and to answer some of the more frequently asked questions. Please note that this is general advice and some aspects may not apply to you.

The pacemaker will be fitted at the Royal Devon and Exeter (RD&E) Hospital. After discharge, follow-up care will take place at the North Devon District Hospital (NDDH).

### Contact numbers

#### RD&E Hospital

Taw Ward	01392 402836
Cardiac Physiologist	01392 406087 01392 402272

#### North Devon District Hospital

Cardiac Physiologist	01271 322475
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Opening hours: Monday to Thursday 8.30am to 5pm,  
Friday 8.30am to 4.30pm

If you need immediate attention out of these hours, please go to the Accident and Emergency.

### Aftercare

- The dressing on your wound needs to stay on for 7 days.
- You can shower or bath, but keep the wound area as dry as possible. Gently pat dry if it gets a little splashed.
- You will have been given some spare dressings to use if needed.

## ▪ Wound Care

- If staples have been used to close the wound, these need to be removed 7 days after the procedure. Please make an appointment with your practice nurse or GP to arrange this.
- If dissolvable stitches have been used, leave the dressing on for 1 week before removing and then gently clean the area.
- If glue has been used, this does not require a dressing. Keep the area dry for 10 days. The glue should naturally peel away during this time.
- If you have any pain/discomfort from the wound, take Paracetamol or your normal painkillers as required.
- **Do not lift your arm** on the side of the pacemaker above shoulder level until your 6-week pacemaker check. Therefore ensure that everything you need to reach up for with two hands is moved down to a lower level. Use it normally apart from this (this does not apply if you have had a pacemaker battery replacement).
- When getting dressed, dress your arm where the pacemaker is implanted first using the opposite arm to the pacemaker. This is to avoid lifting the affected arm too high. When undressing, undress the opposite arm to the pacemaker first.
- If you need to use your arms to help get up from a chair, be careful. Although this shouldn't cause displacement of the leads, the insertion site will be quite tender for a week or so post implant. Rely on the arm opposite the device site as much as possible.
- Take it easy for 2 weeks. **Do not do any heavy lifting or strenuous exercise** until your 6-week pacemaker check. (For battery replacements you can get back to normal activities after 2 weeks).
- Should you experience any palpitations, light-headedness, dizziness or breathlessness, contact your GP.

## Follow-up checks

- You will have been given an ID card when you first have your pacemaker checked – carry this with you at all times.
- Your pacemaker will be checked by the Cardiac Physiologists at the RD&E Hospital before you go home. This check may be done either immediately after your procedure/operation in the theatre, or the following day on the ward.
- You will have your first pacemaker clinic appointment in approximately 6 weeks at the cardiology department, level 2, NDDH. We will send you an appointment letter in the post.
- Most patients will be checked annually after the initial 6-week check at the NDDH.
- If you have had a battery replacement procedure only, a 6-month follow-up appointment will be made, followed by annual checks.

## Driving

- DVLA require you not to drive for 7 days after your procedure. This applies if you have had a new pacemaker fitted or a pacemaker battery replacement.
- Driving is permitted thereafter provided there is no other disqualifying condition.

**You must inform DVLA and your insurance company that you have a pacemaker.**

## Q & A

### Is there anything that will interfere with my pacemaker?

Household appliances such as microwaves, toasters, electric razors, electric blankets, computers and using broadband Wi-Fi will not interfere with your pacemaker as long as they are in good working order.

Mobile phones may affect the pacemaker if held within 6 inches of the device. It is suggested that you hold the handset over the ear opposite to the site of the pacemaker and do not store it in a coat or shirt pocket over the pacemaker.

Equipment that emits a strong electromagnetic field such as arc welding, should be avoided. It will not damage your pacemaker but may temporarily interfere with its setting whilst you are in contact with it.

### Can I travel abroad?

You may set off the airport security device when walking through the arch, but if done briskly this will not damage your pacemaker. Before walking through the arch inform the security team that you have a pacemaker implanted and show them your ID card.

## Further information

More information on pacemakers and interference can be found in the booklet that is given to you with your ID card.

### **PALS**

The Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) ensures that the NHS listens to patients, relatives, carers and friends, answers questions and resolves concerns as quickly as possible. If you have a query or concern call 01271 314090 or e-mail [ndht.pals@nhs.net](mailto:ndht.pals@nhs.net). You can also visit the PALS and Information Centre in person at North Devon District Hospital, Barnstaple.

## Have your say

Northern Devon Healthcare NHS Trust aims to provide high quality services. However, please tell us when something could be improved. If you have a comment or compliment about a service or treatment, please raise your comments with a member of staff or the PALS team in the first instance.

'Care Opinion' comments forms are on all wards or online at [www.careopinion.org.uk](http://www.careopinion.org.uk).

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