



PERMANENT PACEMAKER: HOME INSTRUCTIONS

SITE CARE AND BATHING

The pacemaker site should be kept clean and dry. The dressing should be changed every day using sterile gauze and paper tape. Do not use ointment on the incision site unless instructed to do so by your doctor or nurse. Carefully inspect the incision with each dressing change to note any redness, swelling or drainage. Leave the steri-strips in place until the doctor removes them. You may take a tub bath when you go home after getting a pacemaker, but keep the incision dry for at least two weeks.

ACTIVITY

It is best to take it easy for four weeks at home to avoid damaging the pacemaker. The arm on the same side as your pacemaker should not be lifted above shoulder level for four weeks. Be careful not to hit or rub the insertion site. Do not "fiddle" or play with the pacemaker under your skin. Also, avoid activities like heavy lifting, running, or contact sports. Do not lift more than 10 pounds for two weeks. If you have any specific questions regarding activity, ask your doctor.

CONCERNS

Microwave Ovens: You may cook with a microwave oven. Microwave ovens in good working order are safe to use.

Cellular Phones: You may use a cellular phone; however, do not hold the cellular phone on the same side as your pacemaker or place it in your shirt pocket over the pacemaker.

Strong Magnets: Avoid strong magnets. Examples are magnets used for an MRI and hand-held security wands.

Strong Electrical Fields: Avoid strong electrical fields. Examples are radio transmitting towers, ham radios, and arc welders. Also, avoid leaning over

the open hood of a running car because its electrical field can interfere with your pacemaker.

FOLLOW-UP

It is important to have your pacemaker checked on a regular basis. Ray-Tel Cardiac Services is a pacemaker follow-up service that will perform pacemaker checks over the telephone. You should receive by mail a telephonic transmitter from Ray-Tel with instructions within a month of discharge. Ray-Tel will set up an appointment to check your pacemaker on a regular basis. If they identify any problems with your pacemaker, your doctor will be notified. The telephone number for Ray-Tel Cardiac Services is 1-800-822-4826. These telephone pacemaker checks do not take the place of your regular scheduled appointments with your doctor. You should have an appointment for the doctor to check your pacemaker incision site within two weeks of discharge from the hospital.

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS TO REPORT

Call the doctor if:

- the incision site becomes painful;
- the incision site looks infected (has redness, swelling or drainage); or
- you have a fever of 100.4 degrees or more.

The doctor can be reached at (601) 984-2250 during weekdays from 8:00 am to 4:30 pm. After hours and on weekends, the doctor can be reached by calling (601) 984-1000 and having the operator page the cardiologist on call.

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