Care After Your Permanent Pacemaker Implant

**Activity**
Resume activities gradually. Your doctor may give you specific restrictions for activities, such as driving and exercise.

- If you were given sedation medications, you should not drive, operate heavy or potentially harmful equipment, make important legal decisions, or drink alcohol for 24 hours.
- Allow 4 to 6 weeks for normal healing after your pacemaker implant. During this time, avoid lifting objects more than 10 pounds or reaching above your head.
- Avoid activities that involve lifting or reaching with the affected arm (e.g., bowling, golf, arm exercises) for the first month. This allows the electrodes to become firmly implanted in your heart.

**If your incision is covered with a liquid skin adhesive**
- This sterile substance holds wound edges together. The film usually remains in place for 5 to 10 days, then will naturally fall off your skin.
- Do not scrub, rub or pick at the adhesive film. This may loosen the film before your wound is healed.
- Do not place tape directly over the liquid adhesive because removing the tape also may remove the film.
- Protect the wound from prolonged exposure to sunlight or tanning lamps while the film is in place.
- Do not apply liquid or ointment medications or any other product to your wound while the adhesive film is in place.

**If your incision is closed with Steri-Strips**
- Wash your incision gently with mild soap and water. Gently dry the area. You may shower two days after your implant, but do not directly spray or scrub your incision.
- Allow the Steri-Strips to fall off; do not pull them off.
- If you have a clear dressing over the incision, ask your doctor when it should be removed.
- Watch your incision for signs of infection, such as redness, swelling, tenderness or drainage. Report these signs to your doctor right away.

**Electromagnetic interference**
- Most household appliances – TVs, radios, microwave ovens, shavers, hair dryers – will not interfere with your pacemaker.
- Airport security devices may detect the metal in your pacemaker, but are not likely to interfere with how it works.
- Avoid devices that give off strong electric fields, such as arc welding, high-power transmitters and electric-pulse generators. These can interfere with your pacemaker.
- Some medical equipment used in surgery or other therapies may interfere with your pacemaker. Examples are radiation, MRI and diathermy.

You may wet your wound briefly in the shower or bath, but do not soak or scrub it. Do not swim. Avoid heavy perspiration until the adhesive has fallen off naturally.
Inform all health care providers that you have a pacemaker if you plan to have any procedures. Call your doctor with any questions.
• If you use a cellular phone, carry it on the opposite side of your pacemaker. When using the phone, hold it to the opposite ear.

Pacemaker identification card
• You now have a temporary identification card. You should receive a permanent card by mail in about 6 to 8 weeks.
• Carry the card with you at all times; it has information about your pacemaker and identifies your doctor.
• If you would like an emergency bracelet or necklace, you can obtain an order form from your pharmacy.

Call your doctor if you have any of these signs or symptoms
• Recurrence of symptoms you had before your pacemaker implant
• Swollen ankles
• Redness or drainage at the incision
• Fever
• Swelling and warmth at incision site
• Fainting, dizziness
• Chest pain
• Shortness of breath
• Prolonged weakness or fatigue
• Excessive hiccuping
• Muscle twitching