

How to care for yourself after getting a Pacemaker or Defibrillator

How do I look after my dressing (wound cover)?

- We put a special dressing (cover) over your wound. You need to keep this dressing on for ten days.
- You can get the dressing wet - but don't stand with it directly under the shower.
- Do not soak in the bath, go in a swimming pool, spa or sauna for six weeks.
- After ten days you can remove the dressing.

How do I care for my wound?

- We closed your wound with stitches. You do not need to get the stitches taken out. The stitches will dissolve (disappear). Occasionally a stitch may not dissolve. We will remove any stitches when you come to your appointment at the outpatient clinic.
- Only put lotions on your wound if your doctor or nurse specialist has told you to. Otherwise **do not** apply creams, lotions or powders to your wound.
- Don't wear clothes that press on your wound until it is fully healed. If you wear a bra, attach padding (e.g. sheep skin) to protect your wound.

Exercise and moving

- Do not lift anything heavier than five kilograms using your arm on the same side of the device, for at least one month. If you had a box change, don't lift anything (using the arm on that side) for two weeks.
- Do not push or pull (e.g. vacuum, mow the lawn, do the laundry, push a shopping trolley, hang clothes on the line or reach for items on the top shelf) for at least four weeks. If you had a box change, don't push/pull for two weeks.
- Don't play any sports with a lot of moving and stretching (e.g. golf, swimming) for at least two months.
- You should sleep on your back or the other side of the pacemaker/defibrillator site for at least one or two days.
- Do not drive for _____

When should I call a doctor?

Call us if you have:

- any of the symptoms or complaints you had before getting the pacemaker or defibrillator.
- blackouts, shortness of breath, chest pain or dizziness
- fevers, chills, shivers or sweats

or if your **wound** becomes **infected**. If a wound becomes infected it may:

- look red or swollen
- become more painful
- weep or leak some pus, blood, or blood-like liquid
- have an unpleasant smell
- pull apart or open at the edges of the wound.

In an emergency:

- call 000 for urgent medical help or
- go to your nearest emergency department.

Follow up appointment

- You need to come to the pacemaker/defibrillator clinic about four weeks after getting your pacemaker/defibrillator.
- You need to book into the clinic:

St Vincent's Pacemaker/Defibrillator Clinic

Heart Lung Clinic – Level 4 Xavier building

St Vincent's Public Hospital

Victoria Street Darlinghurst 2010

Phone (02) 8382 3300

- When you book you will need to know the manufacturer of your pacemaker/defibrillator. Your device is a _____

You can also call us if you have any other questions.

Implanting Doctors information: (Hand written and/or attach card)

Electrophysiology Clinical Nurse Consultant (Monday to Friday, 8.30am to 4.30pm)

- Ph 8382 1111
- Ask the switchboard to page 6452