



PACEMAKER/ICD IMPLANTATION

What it is

The heart has a complex electrical system and has a natural pacemaker function that can become defective for a variety of reasons. If your heart beats too slowly or irregularly, you may need an artificial pacemaker. A pacemaker is a small device operated by a battery that is composed of a generator and electrical wires or leads. If your doctor feels that you have a problem with slow heart rhythm, they may refer you for a pacemaker implantation.

Much like a pacemaker, if a patient suffers from a cardiac arrest or bad heart rhythm or they have substantial heart muscle damage from a previous heart attack or virus, they may be referred for an implantable cardioverter-defibrillator (ICD). An ICD is a device that is similar to a pacemaker but it has the additional ability to shock your heart if you develop a bad heart rhythm.

Performance/Preparation

Do not eat or drink anything 6-8 hours before your procedure. In many cases, you will be instructed not to eat or drink after midnight the night before your procedure unless you are told otherwise.

Please ensure to bring your medications in their containers and your health card. You will receive an intravenous (IV) tube prior to the procedure and the area on your chest just below the collarbone will be cleaned and draped in a sterile manner. The vein beneath the collarbone will be punctured after the area receives freezing and 1-3 leads will be implanted into the heart through this puncture. The generator (battery pack) will be attached to the leads, secured in a skin pocket and sewn up.

Duration

The procedure will take 30-60 minutes depending on whether certain procedural testing (e.g. testing your ICD) occurs.

Medications

Please take your medications as prescribed. Your physician or the implanting centre may ask you to either hold or continue any blood thinners you are on. Please bring your medications or a complete list with doses and frequency to the appointment.

Driving

Please arrange for someone to drive you home. Driving restrictions will be device-specific (pacemaker or ICD) and based on the reason for the implant. It will range from one week to several months. Please confirm with the implanting centre prior to discharge.