

CARDIAC DEFIBRILLATOR

A cardiac defibrillator is a small device placed under the skin and connected to the heart with flexible leads. The device constantly monitors heart rate to detect any changes that could cause arrhythmia (irregular heartbeat).

The cardiac defibrillator stores the data about each of the episodes of arrhythmia detected. If the device detects a life-threatening arrhythmia, such as ventricular tachycardia (rapid palpitations) or ventricular fibrillation (completely uncoordinated electrical activity of the heart's ventricles), it sends an electric shock to the heart to disrupt the arrhythmia and reestablish a normal heart rhythm.

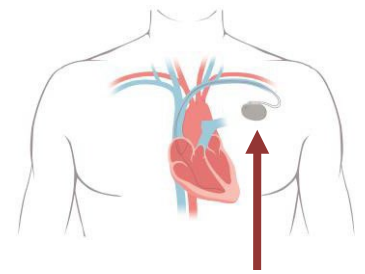
Cardiac defibrillators have a life cycle of about 5 to 7 years, depending on how they were programmed by the cardiologist.

The battery is first checked 6 weeks after the cardiac defibrillator was implanted. Afterwards, the battery is checked every 6 months. Therefore, it is very important for you to come in for your appointments at the pacemaker clinic.

The hospital will provide you with a card that identifies your cardiac defibrillator. The manufacturer will mail you an official card, which you should keep with you at all times.



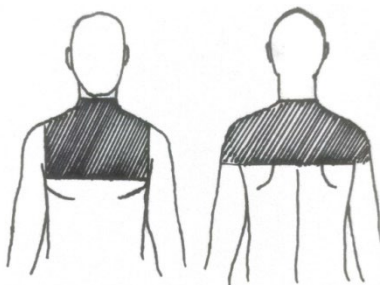
Cardiac defibrillator



Location of the implanted cardiac defibrillator

THE DAY OF THE INTERVENTION

- You must refrain from eating anything after midnight but you can drink liquids (pulp-free, fat-free, dairy-free) up to two hours before your procedure.
- Your chest will be shaved. You will then be asked to wash the shaved areas with a mild soap.



- You may also have blood draws.
- Two venous lines will be installed for the intervention.
- You must remove hairpins, dentures, hearing aids, eyeglasses or contact lenses, underwear, and all jewelry.

THE INTERVENTION

The intervention is performed by a cardiologist/electrophysiologist with the assistance of a radiology technologist and nurse.

YOUR HOSPITAL STAY

- You will be hospitalized for 24 to 48 hours depending on the intervention and its outcome.
- You may eat once you get back to the unit.
- You must lie in bed for a few hours, as directed by the doctor.
- A pressure dressing may be applied to your skin over the location of your cardiac defibrillator to prevent bleeding.
- The nursing staff will regularly take your vital signs and monitor your dressing.

HOSPITAL DISCHARGE

When you are discharged from the hospital, you'll be able to go home in a car as a passenger. The person escorting you should carry your bags.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Wound care

You shouldn't have to wear a bandage when you're discharged from hospital. If there are butterfly bandages over the wound, you must remove them after when they no longer stick to your skin or at least one week after your procedure

Hygiene

- Do not take a bath or swim (pool, spa, lake, ocean, etc.) for 7 days.
- You can shower once your dressings have been removed. On the other hand, you can shower even if you have butterfly bandages over your wound.

Medication

Take the prescribed medication as directed by the doctor.

Pain management

You can take acetaminophen (Tylenol®) if you experience discomfort at the intervention site.

Return to work

Your doctor will tell you when you may return to work.

Physical exertion

- Do not raise your arm on the side of the intervention over shoulder height for 14 days.
- Do not lift anything heavy (children, grocery bags, other objects, etc.) for 14 days, but resume exercises with the arm the day after the intervention to keep it from becoming stiff: rotation, flexion, and extension.
- Physical activities and contact sports (football, baseball, etc.) can be resumed as directed by your doctor.

Motor vehicles

You may resume driving according to your doctor's recommendations.

The Société de l'assurance automobile du Québec (SAAQ) often requires a medical evaluation before you may drive again.

Insurance companies have specific instructions related to driving after a procedure. For more information, contact your company.

Air travel

If you must fly, present the identification card for your cardiac defibrillator at the check-in desk so that you don't have to pass through the screening devices that detect metal, since they may temporarily affect your cardiac defibrillator.

Dentist and doctor

Inform your dentist and any new doctor that you have a cardiac defibrillator.

Medical treatments involving waves

Always consult your doctor before undergoing any other examination or intervention (e.g., magnetic resonance imaging [MRI], radiation therapy, etc.): some shouldn't be performed because they could damage your cardiac defibrillator.

Household appliances

- You can use your household appliances (microwave oven, lawn mower) or office equipment (computer) as long as they are in good condition.
- Some types of equipment that generate a magnetic or electrical field (alarm systems, powerful magnets, arc welders, motors in operation, high-voltage devices, etc.) can temporarily affect your cardiac defibrillator. Stay at least 30 cm (1 foot) from such devices. If you experience symptoms such as rapid, irregular heartbeats or discomfort, step away from the device.

Cellular telephone

- Maintain a minimum of 15 cm (6 inches) between your cell phone and the cardiac defibrillator.
- Hold the telephone to the ear on the opposite side of your body from your cardiac defibrillator.
- Carry your telephone in a pocket or on your belt on the opposite side of your body from your cardiac defibrillator.

SYMPTOMS TO WATCH FOR

- If your defibrillator delivers shocks when you don't need them, call the pacemaker clinic to make an appointment.
- If your defibrillator delivers shocks and you don't feel normal (dizziness, loss of consciousness, etc.), call 9-1-1 immediately.

See your doctor if you have the following symptoms:

- Your heart rate is higher than 130 beats per minute after resting.
- Your heart rate is lower than _____ beats per minute.
- You feel dizzy or lose consciousness.
- You notice a change in your wound: redness, pain, swelling, warmth, or discharge.
- You have a fever (38.5°C or 101°F) or have difficulty breathing.
- You have frequent or constant hiccups or muscle spasms.
- You have palpitations or pain behind the sternum in the center of your chest (retrosternal).



Pacemaker Clinic
819-346-1110, extension 15103
Monday to Friday: 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.



If the clinic is closed, call Info-santé at 8-1-1.



Contact your family doctor or go to the nearest hospital emergency department.

Author

Équipe de la cardiologie de l'Hôpital Fleurimont

Revision and layout

Service des communications
Présidence-direction générale

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