

Implantable Cardioverter Defibrillator (ICD)

An ICD is a small computerized device that sits under your skin and is connected to your heart with small wires. The computer in the device can detect your heart rhythm and, in the instance, where there is a life-threatening heart rhythm the device will reset the rhythm with either a shock directly into the heart or try to bring the rhythm back by outpacing the heart. The ICD can also act as a Permanent Pacemaker (PPM) as well. A PPM is a device that sits under the skin and small wires are threaded down from the generator box to the heart muscle. The generator box will create an electric current that causes the heart to contract. The generator box has a complex computer system that will ensure it only causes a heartbeat when the heart needs one.

Why do I need an ICD?

Sometimes due to disease of the heart muscle such as cardiomyopathy, or abnormalities in electrical conduction in the heart, people are at risk of having abnormal heart rhythms that can make your heart go into very a dangerous fast rate that does not pump blood out of the heart such as ventricular tachycardia or ventricular fibrillation. This can lead to sudden cardiac death or leave you feeling very unwell or cause a faint or loss of consciousness. The cardiologist involved in your care would have considered the risks of your heart problems and the benefits of implanting this device.

How do I prepare for an ICD insertion?

- The Cardiac Catheter Laboratory will ring you in the few days before the date of your ICD procedure and discuss your medications and instructions for the day.
- You must have nothing to eat or drink for at least 6 hours prior to your procedure.
- You will be asked to bring all your medications with you
- If you are a diabetic, on the morning of your procedure, you will be asked not to take your morning insulin or diabetic tablets because you are fasting. You will be reviewed by a doctor on admission who will decide your diabetes management during the admission.
- Some medications interfere with this test so it is important to discuss your medications with us. You will be advised by your Cardiologist if there are medications that should be stopped. Your booking letter will confirm this. It is important to let us know if you take Apixaban (Eliquis), Dabigatran (Pradaxa) or Rivoroxaban (Xarelto), Warfarin.
- Your other usual medications can be continued as normal and may be taken with a sip of water, unless you are instructed to do otherwise
- If you have had a recent blood test, the CCL nurse may ask where you had these taken, so the doctor is aware of recent results, before the procedure.
- Organise an adult support person to pick you up and drive you home from hospital the following day.

What will I expect during the insertion of the ICD?

During the procedure you will need to fast for minimum six hours prior to the procedure. You will come to the operating room in the cardiac catheter lab. The cardiology team will be dressed in sterile gowns and gloves along with masks. Sometimes you will need a heavy sedation anesthetic where you will be completely unaware of the procedure. Other times you will have a lighter anesthetic where you will feel very relaxed for sleepy. The cardiologist will determine what type of anesthetic you will need prior to the case.

There will be a small incision (usually) in the upper left-hand chest wall. The doctors will ensure lots of local anesthetic is put in around the pacemaker operation site at the time of the surgery. The wires are thread down through a blood vessel to touch the heart muscle. The wires are secured, and the small incision is closed with a dissolving suture. There will be an occlusive dressing placed on top of the pacemaker site which is to stay in place for 2 weeks. It is water resistant so you will be able to have a shower.

Will I stay in hospital after the ICD insertion?

When you have an ICD inserted you will need to stay in the hospital overnight. This is to make sure there is no problems with bleeding or with the pacemaker. You will be able to go home usually the next day after a chest x-ray and a pacemaker check

Things to expect after the procedure

You will not be able to drive for 2 weeks post procedure. Further information on your specific driving instructions can be discussed with your Cardiologist. Please discuss with your Cardiologist if you hold a Heavy and Commercial vehicle license.

The dressing is very thin and will stay on until the review you have with the cardiologist at the two-week appointment. There maybe a little bleeding initially under the dressing however it should settle and be minimal.

Avoid moving your affected arm, by not lifting your elbow above your shoulder. You will need to reduce using your arm with limiting carrying in that arm. This is to stop the wires that are attached to your heart from moving. This is particularly important for the first 3-4 weeks. After this the skin grows into the wire and secures them nicely.

An appointment will be made for you to attend the Pacemaker Clinic in the Cardiology Department- Level 1 Clinic C or your Private Cardiologist, two weeks after your procedure.

References:

- www.MonashHeart.org.au
- www.Heartfoundation.org.au
- www.bendigohealth.org.au

If you have a question about your appointment, you can call:

Cardiac Catheter Lab
5454 7010

Patient notes: