

Answers to frequently asked questions after an implantation of cardiac pacemaker / defibrillator (ICD)

Dear patient,

- It is possible to take a shower after 3 days. Please do not expose the wound to a direct jet of water within the first week. Dry the wound area thoroughly.
 - It is favourable to not wear any tight clothing after the implantation of the SM / ICDs, in order to make sure the skin over the device does not get irritated.
 - A small bruise (hematoma) may be formed on the site of implantation, which regresses again within no more than 2 weeks.
 - Since you might experience pain for a few days after the SM / ICD-implantation, you can take the prescribed painkillers if needed.
 - In the first two weeks after the SM / ICD-implantation, you should not move the shoulder and arms with so much force
 - For 14 days, do not move the arm on the side of the SM / ICD by more than 90° away from the body in all directions.
 - Unless absorbable sutures were used, the sutures are usually removed by the family doctor after two weeks. Please arrange an appointment on time:
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- Continue to take medications that are prescribed by your doctor for other heart problems (palpitations, breathlessness, angina pectoris).
 - **Keep the SM / ICD-card with you.** It contains all the important instructions in case of emergency (manufacturer, type, setting the pacemaker / defibrillator).
 - If everything goes as planned, you can resume your usual activities incl. walking, hobbies, sports, any sexual activity and travel immediately after being discharged from the hospital. If necessary a certificate of incapacity will be issued.
 - Driving is permitted after one week (except for an ICD implantation in the so called secondary prevention, however this would be explained by the doctor).
 - We recommend to avoid too much physical exertion such as lifting of heavy objects, prolonged cycling for about 2 days.
 - Avoid taking a bath and going for swimming and sauna for 2 weeks.
 - You will be informed about the follow-up examination of the pacemaker in writing by the Cardiology department at the University Hospital Basel or the attending cardiologist.
 - If you notice redness, swelling, larger bruises or experience severe pain in the area of the pacemaker, have fever for more than 2-3 days or continuously experience an irregular increase or decrease in heart rate, contact either your attending cardiologist or the cardiologist on duty at the University hospital Basel: Tel. 061 265 25 25, or your family doctor.
 - If your device generates a beep sound, please contact us so that we can arrange an early follow-up appointment

- With regard to ICD: If you **have** felt a release of shock, report it on the same day to the attending cardiologist at the University Hospital Basel, so that we can discuss with you how to proceed: Tel: 061-265 25 25.
- If a shock is released, other people are not at risk, even if they are in close physical contact.

Electromagnetic influences

Harmless situation

- Electrical household devices
- Electronic consumer products, such as radio, video, TV and hi-fi equipment
- Wireless home phones and mobile devices
- It is advisable to quickly walk through devices such as metal detectors and anti-theft devices (e.g. in department stores).

Situations with a minimum risk

- Do **not** repair connected electrical appliances
- Electric tools: Do not keep them in the immediate vicinity of the pacemaker / ICD (e.g. a drilling machine)
- Thermal motors: Do not touch the cable for the power supply when the engine is running
- Electric toys: even at low voltage, do not touch the cable
- Welding equipment: Keep a safe distance of at least one meter
- Avoid the immediate vicinity of radio transmitters, amateur radio equipment or strong radar devices
- At the airport, you should show your pacemaker ID card to the supervisor at the security checkpoint

Situations with a considerable risk - discuss with your cardiologist

- A magnetic resonance examination (MRI)
- An electrocautery (electric surgical blade)
- An electroshock treatment
- Radiotherapy
Said situation only appears in hospital. Inform all doctors, who are responsible for your treatment, that you have a SM / ICD (**show your ID!**).
- Induction plates in kitchens (however, if you do not bend directly over the plate, there is hardly any risk of interference with the pacemaker)
- Specific interference in the workplace, discuss possible risks with your doctor

General:

- The battery life is approximately 8-10 years and is dependent on the SM / ICD model.
- In case of further questions, fears or problems, contact your attending doctors or us directly (061-265 25 25).