



## After Your Implantable Cardiac Defibrillator (ICD) Generator Change

*What you need to know*

### Who to Call

- If you have questions about your appointments:
  - **UWMC - Montlake patients:** Call the Cardiology Clinic at 206.598.4300 weekdays between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m.
  - **UWMC - Northwest patients:** Call the Cardiology Clinic at 206.363.1004 weekdays between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m.
- If you have a question about your procedure, care after your procedure, or your follow-up:
  - Weekdays from 8 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., call your EP Nurse  
\_\_\_\_\_ at \_\_\_\_\_.
  - After hours and on weekends and holidays, call 206.598.6190 and ask to page the Electrophysiology (EP) Fellow on call. The EP Fellow is a doctor who works with your primary electrophysiologist. Both doctors specialize in caring for patients with ICDs.
  - **For all urgent concerns, call 911.**

### If You Go Home the Same Day

Before you are discharged, a doctor or nurse practitioner will check your insertion site and talk with you about the results of your procedure.

Please ask questions if you do not understand something your doctor or nurse tells you.



*A responsible adult must take you home after your procedure.*

## If You Had ANY Anesthesia or Sedation

Anesthesia and sedation medicines can make you sleepy and make it hard for you to think clearly. Because of this:

- **A responsible adult must take you home.** You may not take a bus, shuttle, taxi, or any other transportation by yourself.
- **For the next 24 hours:**
  - Do **NOT** drive.
  - Make sure you have a responsible adult who can help you if needed during this time.
  - Do **NOT** be responsible for the care of anyone else, such as children, pets, or an adult who needs care.
  - Do **NOT** drink alcohol, or take drugs other than the ones your doctors prescribed or suggested.
  - Do **NOT** make important decisions or sign legal papers.

## Wound Care

- Call one of the numbers on page 1 **right away** if you have:
  - Redness, swelling, or drainage at the incision site
  - Fever higher than 100.4°F (38°C)
  - Chills
  - Any concerns or questions about your wound
- Keep the site clean and dry.
- Remove your dressing (bandage) within 24 to 48 hours after your surgery.
- Your wound was closed with skin glue. You may shower 48 hours after your surgery, but do not soak your incision until it is **fully** healed.
- Do **not** put lotion or powder on your incision until it is **fully** healed.
- Avoid touching the area over or around your ICD. Do **not** poke or twist your ICD.
- In the car, add some padding to your seat belt strap if it crosses over your ICD implant site. Keep this padding in place until your wound is fully healed.

- **Do not let anyone poke or probe your incision** with fingers or instruments before checking with us first. If a healthcare provider feels this needs to be done to provide your care, have them call us **before** doing this type of exam or procedure.
- Your wound will be checked 7 to 14 days after your surgery. It is **very** important that you go to this appointment and all your follow-up visits.

**See the appointment page your nurse gave you for the dates and times of your follow-up visits.**

## Activity Restrictions

### Travel

If you have travel plans in the first 2 weeks after your surgery, please check with your doctor for instructions.

### Other

- Your activity restrictions could last **3 months or longer**, based on your treatment plan. Check with your doctor before you do any activities that:
  - Involve swinging your arm, such as swimming, golfing, tennis, or vacuuming
  - Can injure your shoulder or wound site, such as shooting a gun, wrestling, or playing football
- Follow your doctor's instructions about driving and sexual activity.
- Always avoid touching the area over or around your ICD. Do not poke or twist your ICD.

## When to Call

- **Call 911 right away** if you have:
  - A shock from your device **AND** you do not feel well – for instance, you pass out, have chest pain, or feel dizzy or short of breath
  - More than 1 shock in a row from your device

- If you receive a shock AND you are feeling fine:
  - **UWMC - Montlake patients:** Weekdays 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., call an EP nurse at 206.598.4555.
  - **UWMC - Northwest patients:** Weekdays from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., call 206.363.1004.
  - After hours, on a weekend, or on a holiday, call 206.598.6190 and ask to page the EP Fellow on call.

Keep a log of the shocks you receive. It is helpful for us to know:

- The **number of shocks** you have had
- **How you felt** before and after each shock
- The **time of day** you received each shock
- **What you were doing** when each shock occurred

## Special Long-Term Precautions

### Travel

- Always carry your ICD identification (ID) card.
- If you must pass through a metal detector, hand this ID card to security staff and tell them that you might set off the alarm.
- You may also want to carry a card with the ICD information translated into the language(s) of the country (or countries) you will visit or travel through.
- Although some studies show there are no risks to ICDs from metal detectors, most makers of the devices still advise caution:
  - You may walk through the metal-detection arch, but do not stay inside the arch or lean on the sides of the structure.
  - If a metal-detection hand wand is used, ask security staff to avoid waving or holding it over your ICD.
  - If you feel dizzy, have fast heartbeats (*palpitations*), or receive a shock from your ICD when near a metal detector, step away from it. Your ICD should begin to work properly right away.
  - Body scanners that are used in some airports and other places will not affect your ICD.
- Always carry a full list of your current medicines. Include their doses, how often you take them each day, and why you take them.

- Always carry your medicines with you in your carry-on bags. Do **not** pack them in your checked luggage.
- Carry phone numbers for your healthcare providers in case of emergency.

### **Magnetic Fields**

Magnets or magnetic fields are found in or are created by many items we are around every day. Some of these are:

- Small appliances with motors
- Stereo speakers
- Gas engines
- Cell phones
- Desktop and laptop computers
- Welding machines
- CB radios
- Magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) machines
- Anti-theft devices in stores
- Metal detectors

Most of these items, such as microwaves and blenders, are safe to be close to, but some create magnetic fields that are strong enough to interfere with how your ICD works.

Some basic advice and precautions for sources of magnetic fields are listed below and on pages 5 and 6. **For more details, contact the maker of your ICD.**

**NOTE: These recommendations all assume that the item you are using is properly grounded, is in proper working order, and is being used for its intended purpose.**

### **Cell Phones**

**Most** cell phones are safe if you:

- Carry your phone **at least** 6 inches (15 centimeters) away from your implant site. Most cell phones keep sending a signal even when they are not in use.
- Hold it to your ear on the **opposite side** of your ICD to avoid problems.

## Radio Transmitters

Radio transmitters such as CB radios, walkie-talkies, and remote-controlled toys may interfere with your ICD. Here are guidelines for distances to keep from these items:

Watts Generated	Distance to Keep from It
3 watts	12 inches (30 centimeters)
25 to 199 watts	3 feet (1 meter)
200 watts or more	10 feet (3 meters)

If you are unsure about the power output of your radio transmitter, call the company that made the device.

## Engines and Small Motors

- Use caution when working on car engines. Keep your ICD **at least** 24 inches (60 centimeters) away from a running car engine.
- Most small appliances or hand tools with motors are safe to use when the item is grounded, in good condition, and held the correct distance from your body for safe and proper operation.

## Electric Toothbrushes

- Keep the toothbrush handle **at least** 1 inch (2.5 centimeters) away from your ICD.
- Keep **at least** 6 inches (15 centimeters) between the charger and your ICD.

## Medical Procedures or Equipment

Be sure the person who is doing your procedure knows you have an ICD. **Never assume everyone involved in your care knows this.** Always tell your providers and healthcare personnel that you have an ICD.

These procedures or devices may interfere with your ICD:

- *Electrocautery* (a procedure that uses an electric current to remove unwanted tissue, seal off blood vessels, or create an incision)
- Placement of a *central venous catheter* (a small tube that is placed in a large vein to deliver medicine)
- *Lithotripsy* (a procedure that uses shock waves to break up stones in the kidney, bladder, or ureter)

- *Ultrasound* (an imaging method that uses sound waves)
- *Electrolysis* (hair removal)
- *External cardioversion or defibrillation* (a procedure to bring an abnormal heart rhythm back to normal)
- Magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) machines  
**Note:** At this time, MRI machines **are NOT safe** for patients with ICDs to be in or around. **Avoid all MRI exams.**
- Hearing aid with a coil around the neck that detects sounds and sends digital signals to the amplifier  
**Note:** Before using this type of hearing aid, call your ICD maker.
- *Radiation* therapy (usually used in cancer treatment)
- TENS (*transcutaneous electrical nerve stimulation*, a pain-control device)
- Body-fat measuring scales

### Other Precautions

Many makers of ICDs advise that you also **avoid being around or using these items:**

- Arc welders
- Gas-powered chainsaws
- Induction furnaces such as kilns
- Magnetic (therapy) mattress pads or pillows
- Electric steel furnaces
- Dielectric heaters (heaters that use radiowaves or microwaves)
- Electrical transmissions towers (if you are **inside** a restricted area)
- Jackhammers
- Stun guns

### Dental Work

- Tell your dentist that you have an ICD. Most times, you will not need to be concerned that any of the devices the dentist uses will interfere with your ICD.
- If you did not need antibiotics for your dental procedures before your surgery, you will not need antibiotics now that you have an ICD. If you have questions, please ask your doctor.

## Your ICD

This handout covers **only** basic precautions you may need to take with your ICD. Each device may have special precautions to consider.

If you have any questions about what might cause problems for your ICD, please contact the maker for more specific information about your newly implanted device.

Here is contact information for 4 companies that make ICDs:

### Abbott

[www.sjm.com](http://www.sjm.com)

818.362.6822 or 800.681.9293

### Biotronik

[www.biotronikusa.com](http://www.biotronikusa.com)

800.547.0394

### Guidant/Boston Scientific

[www.guidant.com](http://www.guidant.com)

866.GUIDANT  
(866.484.3268)

[www.bostonscientific.com](http://www.bostonscientific.com)

888.272.1001

### Medtronic

[www.medtronic.com](http://www.medtronic.com)

800.551.5544  
800.328.2518

## Questions?

Your questions are important. Call your doctor or healthcare provider if you have questions or concerns.

- **For general questions**  
weekdays 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.:
  - Montlake patients: call 206.598.4300
  - Northwest patients: call 206.363.1004
- **For questions related to your procedure** weekdays 6:30 a.m. to 8 p.m.:
  - Montlake patients: call 206.598.7146
  - Northwest patients: call 206.668.1084Ask to talk with a nurse.
- **For urgent concerns related to your procedure**, or if it is after hours or on a weekend or holiday: call 206.598.6190 and ask to page the Cardiology E Fellow on call.