

Your Subcutaneous Implantable Cardiac Defibrillator (ICD)

What you need to know

Who to Call

- If you have questions about your appointments, call the Cardiology Clinic at 206-598-4300.
- If you have a question about your procedure, care after your procedure, or your ICD follow-up, call your EP Nurse
_____ at _____
weekdays between 8 a.m. and 4:30 p.m.
- For all urgent concerns call 9-1-1.
- Weekends, holidays, or after hours, call 206-598-6190 and ask for the Electrophysiology (EP) Fellow on call to be paged. The EP Fellow is a doctor who works with your primary electrophysiologist. These doctors specialize in caring for patients with ICDs.

Wound Care

- Call one of the numbers above **right away** if you have:
 - Redness or swelling
 - Drainage
 - Fever above 99.5°F (37.5°C)
 - Chills
 - Any concerns or questions about your wound
- Remove your dressing (bandage) within 24 to 48 hours after your surgery, if it is not removed while you are in the hospital.
- Do not put lotion or powder on your incision until it is **completely** healed.
- Avoid touching the area over or around your ICD. Do not poke or twist your ICD.
- **Your wound will be closed with skin glue.**
 - You may shower 48 hours after your surgery.
 - Do not soak your incision until it is **completely** healed.

- **Do not allow anyone to poke or probe your incision** with fingers or instruments before checking with us first. If a health care provider feels this needs to be done to provide your care, have them **call the EP Doctor *before*** doing this type of exam or procedure.
- Your wound will be checked 7 to 10 days after your surgery. It is **very** important that you keep this appointment and all your follow-up appointments.

See the appointment page you were given by your nurse for the dates and times of your follow-up appointments.

Activity Restrictions

Short-term:

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

Long-term:

- Follow your doctor's instructions about driving and sexual activity.
- Continue to avoid touching the area over or around your ICD. Do not poke or twist your ICD.

When to Call for Help

- Call 9-1-1 right away if you have:
 - A shock from your device **AND** you do not feel well – for example, you have passed out or have dizziness, shortness of breath, or chest pain.
 - More than 1 shock in a row from your device.
- If you receive a shock from your device **AND you are feeling fine**, call an EP Nurse weekdays 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. (see phone number on page 1).
- If you wish to speak to someone after hours or on a weekend or holiday, call 206-598-6190 and ask for the EP Fellow on call to be paged.

Keep a log of the shocks you receive. It is helpful for your doctor 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 card.
- If you must pass through a metal detector, hand your ICD identification card to security staff and tell them that you might set off the alarm. You may also want to carry a card with this information in 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 manufacturers still suggest being cautious.
 - You may walk through the metal-detection arch, but do not remain 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. The wand should stay at least 6 inches away from the ICD.
 - If you feel dizzy, have fast heartbeats (palpitations), or are shocked by your ICD when you are near a metal detector, just move further away. Your ICD should begin to work properly right away.
 - Body scanners that are used in some airports and other locations will not have any effect on your ICD.
- Always carry a complete list of your current medicines. Include their doses, how often you take them each day, and why you are taking 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 health care 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 affect how your ICD works.

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

NOTE: All recommendations assume that the equipment you are using is properly grounded, is working properly, and is being used for its intended purpose.

Cell Phones

Most cell phones are safe if you:

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

Electric Toothbrushes

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

Car Engines and Tools or Appliances with Small Motors

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

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 manufacturer.

Medical Procedures or Equipment

Be sure the person who is doing your procedure knows you have an ICD. Never assume everyone involved in your health care knows this. It is always safer to be sure and to remind those involved in your care.

Take precautions with these procedures or devices:

- *Electrocautery* (a surgical procedure that uses an electric current to remove unwanted tissue, seal off blood vessels, or create an incision)
- *Lithotripsy* (a procedure that uses shock waves to break up stones in the kidney, bladder, or ureter)
- *Ultrasound* (an imaging technique)
- *Electrolysis* (hair removal)
- *External cardioversion or defibrillation* (a procedure to bring an abnormal heart rhythm back to normal)
- *Magnetic resonance imaging* (MRI) machines
 - At this time, MRI machines **are not safe** for patients with ICDs to be in or around. **MRI exams must be avoided.**
- Hearing aid with a coil around the neck that detects sounds and sends digital signals to the amplifier
 - Before using this type of hearing aid, call your ICD manufacturer.
- *Radiation* therapy (usually used to treat cancer)
- TENS (*transcutaneous electrical nerve stimulation*, a pain-control device)
- Scales that measure body fat

Other Precautions

Many manufacturers of ICDs recommend 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 to heat)
- Electrical transmissions towers (if you are **inside** a restricted area)
- Jackhammers
- Stun guns

Dental Work

- Tell your dentist that you have an ICD. Usually, 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, then 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** general precautions you may need to take with your implanted device. Each device may have special precautions to consider.

If you have any questions about what might cause problems for your ICD, please contact the manufacturer for more specific information about your newly implanted device. Here is contact information for the company that makes the subcutaneous ICD:

Guidant/Boston Scientific

www.guidant.com

866-GUIDANT (866-484-3268)

www.bostonscientific.com

888-272-1001

Questions?

Your questions are important. Call one of the phone numbers on page 1 if you have questions or concerns.

Cardiology Clinic:
206-598-4300