

Following a subcutaneous implantable cardioverter-defibrillator (S-ICD®) implant

This information is for anyone who has had a Subcutaneous Implantable Cardioverter Defibrillator (also called S-ICD®) inserted.

Caring for yourself at home

The day after implant,

- Rest for the first 24 hours.
- Your wound may feel quite bruised and sore for the first day or two. It is important that you take analgesics (painkillers) as needed but you should not exceed the recommended daily dose.

During the first 2 weeks,

- In general, you are free to move your arm but should try to avoid movements that could create pressure on the wound.
- It is not advisable to exercise in the first 2 weeks but you can resume normal activity in your home.
- **Do not** lift anything heavy. This means do not lift anything more than 5 kilograms or 10 pounds (a small suitcase, a bag of groceries).

For the first 4-6 weeks,

- Recovery time differs from patient to patient and will depend on how your wound is healing and whether or not you are taking oral anticoagulants.
- When your wounds have healed, you can move freely.
- Slowly build up your level of exercise.
- Avoid contact sports (e.g. rugby, judo).
- Discuss long-distance travel plans with your physician.
- Do not stop or change your medications without talking with your family doctor.

Caring for your wound

Leave the bandage on for 2 days. Do not get the bandage wet.

When you remove the bandages, you will see some thin bandage strips or staples over the incisions.

Ask your family doctor to remove the staples at your 1 week post procedure appointment. Leave the bandage strips in place. Let them fall off on their own. It can take up to 2 weeks for the strips to fall off.

Do not get your incision wet for 5 days.

- When you shower, do not use soap on the wound.
- Gently pat the wound dry. Do not rub it.
- Do not put any creams or ointments on the incision.
- Your stitches should dissolve on their own.

Managing pain

- If you are having pain, take plain acetaminophen (such as Tylenol or store brand). You can take 1 to 2 tablets, every 4 to 6 hours. Never take more than 4000 mg in any 24 hour period (no more than 12 tablets).
- Do not take ibuprofen (such as Motrin, Advil, or a store brand) for pain unless your doctor has said you can.

Medications

Take your medications as directed.

If you are taking a blood thinner such as warfarin (Coumadin):

- start taking it on _____

Check with your family doctor when you must get your blood tested.

Driving

For your own safety and the safety of others, you must follow the mandatory driving restrictions in the British Columbia Motor Vehicle Act.

The Act says that after a defibrillator implant, you are:

- You are **no longer** allowed to drive a **commercial vehicle** (class 1 to 4) **at any time**.
- You are **not** allowed to drive a **private vehicle** (class 5) **for the time checked off** **here by your doctor**.

- 4 weeks after the defibrillator implant.
- 3 months from the date your dangerous heart rhythm was diagnosed. Before driving again, you must have the doctor's approval.
- 6 months from the date your dangerous heart rhythm caused you to feel unwell, faint, or lose consciousness. Before driving again, you have the doctor's approval.

Talk to your heart doctor if you have questions about driving, especially if it relates to your work.

When to see your doctor(s)

Make an appointment to see your family doctor one (1) week after procedure.

You will be notified for a follow-up appointment to see your electrophysiologist (ICD doctor) in 1 month.

Clinic: _____

Phone #: _____

OR

Specific physician: _____

Phone #: _____

If you have not heard from them within 3 weeks, please call them at the number provided above.

When to get help

Call 9-1-1 if you notice any of the following:

- a shock from the defibrillator and you do not feel well afterwards
- trouble breathing or cannot catch your breath
- pain in your chest and/or shoulder
- blood soaking through your bandage
- dizzy or confused
- Your heart feels like it is beating quickly or racing
- 2 or more shocks within a 24-hour period, **or** if you pass out:

Do not drive yourself to the hospital.

Contact your family doctor right away if you notice:

- any redness, swelling, or coloured liquid coming from your incision
- a fever over 38.5°C (101.3°F)
- new bruising or redness around the incision
- pain that gets worse or does not improve with pain medicine
- any stitches in your incision after 3 to 4 weeks.

Always carry your defibrillator identification card with you.

A permanent card is mailed to you in about 6 weeks. If you do not get this card in the mail, let the staff know in the device clinic.

Questions or concerns?

- Contact your family doctor
- Call HealthLinkBC - 8-1-1 (7-1-1 for deaf and hard of hearing) or go online to www.HealthLinkBC.ca

This material has been reviewed and approved by patients, families and staff.



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