

Discharge Instructions for Implantable Cardioverter-Defibrillator (ICD)

You had a procedure to insert an implantable cardioverter-defibrillator (ICD). Although it is a complex combination of electronic circuits, batteries, and electrodes, it is small enough to be put under your skin. Once placed inside your body, this device can help control your heart rhythm. It does this by shocking your heart back into a normal rhythm when needed. The ICD can't fix existing heart problems, but it can reduce your risk of dying from an abnormal heart rhythm.

Activity

- Don't drive until your doctor says it's okay.
- Limit your activity for several days.
- On the incision side, don't raise your arm above your shoulder for a few days. Avoid activities that require moving your arms over your head, such as painting, for several days. This will give your ICD lead a chance to secure itself inside your heart.
- Ask your doctor when you can expect to return to work.

Other Precautions

- Take your temperature and check your incision for signs of infection (redness, swelling, drainage, or warmth) every day for a week.
- Take your medications exactly as directed. Don't skip doses.
- Carry an ID card that contains information about your ICD. You may need to show this card to security personnel if your ICD sets off a metal detector.
- Keep your cellular phone away from your ICD. Don't carry your phone in your shirt pocket, even when it's turned off.
- Avoid strong magnets, such as those used in an MRI or in hand-held security wands.
- Avoid strong electrical fields such as those made by radio transmitting towers, "ham" radios, and heavy-duty electrical equipment.
- Avoid leaning over the open hood of a running car. A running engine creates an electrical field.
- Make regular appointments with your doctor, who will check to make sure you remain healthy and feeling good.

Follow-Up

Make a follow-up appointment as directed by our staff.

When to Call Your Doctor

Call your doctor immediately if you have any of the following:

- Fever above 100.0°F
- Signs of infection at your incision site (redness, swelling, drainage, or warmth)
- Twitching in your chest muscles
- Increased pain around your ICD
- Bleeding at your incision
- Arm swelling on the side of the incision