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Chelsfield Park Hospital
Shirley Oaks Hospital
Sloane Hospital

INFORMATION FOR PATIENTS HAVING AN IMPLANTABLE LOOP RECORDER INSERTED

Heart rhythm problems can produce a number of symptoms including palpitations, dizziness and sometimes even blackouts. To be able to prescribe the best treatment it is important to record the heart rhythm at the time of symptoms. For some patients symptoms are so infrequent that it is not possible to record them using normal heart tracings. The Implantable Loop Recorder gets around this problem; it is smaller than a matchbox (about the same size as a USB stick) and is implanted underneath the skin and monitors the heart for up to two years. It can remember hours of ECG - when it detects the heart rhythm to be abnormal and when the patient activates it.

IMPORTANT

- **If you are taking warfarin we will need to ensure that your INR (a measure of your blood's thinness) has been well controlled prior to the procedure. We will also need to control it for the procedure. Please arrange to have your INR checked 5 days before your procedure. Phone us on that day so that we can advise you whether to stop the warfarin. If this coincides with a weekend, phone us at the earliest opportunity. Please have your yellow book to hand when you phone. You MUST tell us if you are taking warfarin for an artificial heart valve or a recent clot in the leg (deep vein thrombosis /DVT) or on the lung (pulmonary embolus /PE).**
- **If you are taking Clopidogrel (Plavix) you will need to stop this 5 days prior to your procedure. However if you have had an angioplasty please phone the Cardiac Helpline for advice. This will also apply to other blood-thinning drugs; if in doubt please ask.**
- **Please take all of your other tablets on the day of your admission and bring them with you.**
- **If there is any chance that you may be pregnant please let us know.**
- **If you are taking antibiotics on the days leading up to your procedure, please let us know so that we can advise you what to do.**
- **If you are a tablet-controlled diabetic please do NOT take your diabetic medication on the day of your admission. If you are diabetic on insulin please take half your usual dose of Insulin; we will check your blood sugar when you arrive.**
- **You must not eat or drink for 4 hours before your procedure.**

The implant procedure takes place in one of the Cardiac Catheter Labs. There will always be a nurse available to explain what is happening. The procedure to implant the reveal device usually takes about 15 minutes and is done as a day case.

Local anaesthetic is used to numb the area where the device will be placed; this stings at first but then the area will become numb. You will be able to feel pressure but should feel no pain for the rest of the procedure. A small cut (1-2cm) is then made in the skin and a small pocket is formed into which the device is inserted and secured. The wound is then closed with dissolvable stitches and a dressing is placed over the top. Discuss with your doctor where this scar will go and how obvious it will be. We use antibiotics both before and after the procedure to reduce the risk of infection. **Please let us know if you are allergic to Penicillin.**

You will recover from the procedure for a few hours and will then be able to go home. During that time the Cardiac technicians will teach you how to activate the device so that it will remember your heart rhythm at the time of your symptoms.

Remember, if you activate the device you should come back to see us, during office hours, Monday to Friday, so that we can download the information.

Complications

This procedure cannot be performed without some element of risk; you need to understand the possible complications before you sign the consent form. It is important that you understand that these complications are uncommon and unpredictable. The majority of patients have no problems. The possible complications are listed below for your information:

Infection: this occurs very rarely. Antibiotics are given routinely to help prevent this.

Haematoma (severe bruising): this also occurs very rarely. Patients taking blood thinning drugs are more prone to haematoma formation.

Scar: there will always be a scar; this is unavoidable. Please discuss with your doctor where this will go and therefore how obvious it will be.

Items which you should bring with you:

Current tablets/medicines, details of your GP, next of kin plus one other person (telephone numbers at home and at work), dressing gown, pyjamas/night dress.

You may also need:

Slippers, shaving equipment, mirror, comb/brush, flannel/sponge, towel, cloths for travelling home, change for the phone, reading glasses and hearing aid (if required).

You should not bring:

Television, jewellery (except wedding ring), large amounts of money.

When you come into hospital further advice will be available from the doctors and nurses.