

## Pacemaker

### Introduction

The Covid pandemic has had a significant impact on the NHS ability to provide routine elective services. We recognise that patients are waiting longer than we would all like and it is not always possible to identify when treatment will take place. This document provides you with information on how you are able to support yourself while waiting to attend the hospital. The guidance has been written by clinicians who are responsible for your care.

Please read the following information in conjunction with the staying healthy guidance appropriate for your condition.

#### What is a Pacemaker?

A pacemaker is a small, smooth metal box containing a battery powered, computerised electronic device. It has one or, more often, two leads (or wires) which are inserted into the heart, usually via the veins. The number of leads needed will depend on the findings of the investigations you have had and you could have either one placed in the right ventricle (lower chamber), or one in both the right upper and lower chambers. The pacemaker is usually implanted under the skin of the left chest wall in a 'pocket' on top of the muscle, where it will receive signals from the lead(s) and continuously monitor your heartbeat.

### Guidance for Patients

When we breathe in we take in oxygen which is vital to keep all living tissues healthy and working well. The oxygen enters our blood stream and the left side of the heart pumps the blood around our body via the arteries, delivering oxygen to the tissues, muscles and organs. As the tissues use the oxygen, they make carbon dioxide which is removed in the bloodstream. This is taken to the right side of the heart to be pumped to the lungs where we breathe out the carbon dioxide and breathe in vital oxygen. This is a continuous process. The pumping mechanism of the heart is controlled by electrical signals, produced in the heart's natural pacemaker called the sinus or sino-atrial (SA) node. If any part of this electrical pathway becomes disturbed or ceases to function properly, problems with the heart rhythm will occur and can result in a very slow heart beat ('bradycardia') or a very fast heart beat ('tachycardia') which will not be able to support the essential circulation of blood and, therefore, oxygen to the brain and body.

### How the test is performed

**You will normally expect to come in and stay for the day or for just one night, but this will depend on your consultant, your medical condition, and the time of your procedure and also whether or not you will have support at home when you are discharged. You may wish to have someone to stay with you on the ward/unit to support you on the day of your admission. You are welcome to do this, but please keep other visitors to a minimum to enable you to benefit from rest after the procedure.**

### Contact Us

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