

# IMPLANTABLE CARDIOVERTER DEFIBRILLATOR (ICD)



## ***What is an ICD?***

An ICD is a small device (about the size of a pocket watch) implanted under the skin, typically just below the collarbone on the left or right of your chest. It serves the same purpose as an external defibrillator, but ICDs monitor your heart rhythm automatically and delivers therapy as needed, so as to prevent cardiac arrest.

In addition to the device itself, leads (tiny insulated wires) are implanted that carry information signals from your heart to the device and when necessary carry electrical impulses to your heart.

The third component of your implantable device system is a programmer, like an external computer in your doctor's office, that will interrogate the device and retrieve information that will assist the doctor in your treatment.

## ***How is the ICD implanted?***

ICD implantation is not an open heart procedure. Before surgery, medication is usually given to make you sleepy and comfortable. The procedure can be performed under local or general anaesthesia. A small incision will be made in the upper chest and one or two leads will be guided through a vein into the heart. The cardiologist will connect the leads with the device, test the device and program the settings. The device is then inserted beneath the skin and the incision closed. After the implant, there may be a slight bulge underneath the skin where the device is located. You will usually stay in hospital overnight and go home the next day with instructions for caring for your incision site. For a short time after your implant you will need to limit how much you move the arm close to the implant site. Your cardiologist will discuss this with you.

## ***What are the benefits and risks?***

All treatment and outcomes are specific to individual patients. Please discuss this with your Doctor.

## ***Is there any preparation for the procedure?***

On the day of the procedure you will need to fast for 6 hours prior to the procedure time. You can take medication with a small amount of water.

You should bring an overnight bag with you (including all your medications).

## ***What happens when I arrive at hospital?***

You need to present to the Admissions Department at the hospital. From there you will be taken to either the day procedure area or ward. You will be admitted by a member of the nursing staff and prepared for the procedure. A consent form for the procedure will need to be signed if not already done.

## ***What happens after my procedure?***

Your cardiologist will normally discuss the results of the procedure immediately after it is completed, or you may be transferred to the ward and your cardiologist will see you there to discuss the results. Any further instructions will be given to you at that time.

An appointment for follow up will be made on discharge if required.

## ***What can I expect after the procedure?***

Many people with an ICD resume their normal daily activities after full recovery from surgery, however there may be certain situations your doctor asks you to avoid. Your cardiologist will provide the guidance for your particular condition.

***Should you have any specific queries or concerns relating to your procedure,  
please discuss these with your Cardiologist.***