

Atrial Fibrillation Pacemaker at the Gates Vascular Institute What You Should Know

Before the Procedure

- You must fast (no food or liquids) 6 hours before scheduled procedure time, unless told otherwise by your atrial fibrillation team.
- Medications can be taken before procedure with a sip of water.
- When you are called to schedule your procedure date, you will receive instructions on if your blood thinner needs to be temporary stopped. It is very important to follow these instructions.
- If you use a CPAP machine for sleep apnea, please bring to the hospital with you.
- Please make arrangements for a ride home.
- Please arrive at Gates Vascular Institute (875 Ellicott Street, Buffalo NY 14203) TWO HOURS before your scheduled procedure time.
- You will be checked in and have a patient room ready for you and your loved ones.

Potential Risks and Complications

- Potential complications include:
 - Bleeding from the incision
 - Infection
 - Cardiac Tamponade (bleeding around the heart)
 - Pneumothorax (puncture of the lungs)
 - Death

The cumulative risk of these complications is < 1%

During the Procedure

- You will be brought to the procedure holding area. Here the nurses will place an IV, obtain any necessary blood work, and obtain some brief medical information from you.
- If there is excessive hair at the site of incision it may be clipped off.
- Sticky pads will be placed on your chest so the staff can monitor your heart rate during the procedure.
- You may remain awake for procedure but you will receive sedative medication to help you relax/sleep. Our team strives to make your procedure a comfortable and pleasant experience.
- The pacemaker insertion site (chest) will be cleansed with antiseptic soap and sterile towels and a sheet will be placed around the site.
- Once the anesthetic has taken effect, the Electrophysiologist will make a small incision on the chest wall. A sheath is inserted into the blood vessel under your collarbone and is advanced into the heart. This will be done under Fluoroscopy (a special type of X-ray that will be displayed on a TV monitor).
- Once the lead or leads are inserted into the correct position in the heart, they will be tested to assure proper location and function.
- The lead or leads will be attached to the generator (the battery of the pacemaker) and it will be slipped under the skin through the incision.
- The incision will then be sutured closed and adhesive strips will be placed over it.

After the Procedure

- Your loved ones will receive a phone call in your patient room, immediately following the procedure to keep them updated.
- Shortly after the procedure, you will be brought down to your room to recover. (You may be in postop area for a short time before this).
- A provider from the Electrophysiology team will be down within a few hours to check on you and go over discharge with you.
- It will take approximately 6 weeks for the wires on your new device to stabilize into place. To avoid moving these wires out of place, it is important to follow these restrictions for 5-6 weeks:
 - Do not: extend your arm (on the side the pacemaker was placed) above your head, lift your elbow above your shoulder, use your arm for any excessive pushing or pulling, or participate in any activity that will involve excessive motion with that arm.

Wound Care

- Remove the outer dressing 3 days after your procedure. (After the procedure you may be told to leave dressing in place for 5 days).
 - Underneath your dressing you may have steri-strips (small white adhesive strips). These will remain in place until your follow up appointment.
- You may shower once you have removed the outer dressing.
 - Only use soap and water around the incision, wash and dry the area gently, and keep it open to air. Do not scrub over the steri-strips. There is no need to apply a new dressing after removing the original.
 - If the steri-strips start to peel off, simply cut off the loose ends. Do not attempt to pull them off.

Warning Signs

- It is not unusual to have some swelling or bruising at the incision site after your procedure.
- You may also have some blood on the original outer dressing.
- The area may be sore and tender for a few days.
- Monitor the site closely, on a daily basis, and notify your atrial fibrillation team:
 - If the bruising or swelling increases substantially
 - The amount of drainage on the dressing worsens or if you have any drainage from the incision once you have removed the original outer dressing.
 - If the pain at your incision site worsens and is not relieved by medication.
 - Any fever or excessive chills.

Follow up appointments

- 3-4 weeks after pacemaker implantation

This follow up may change on a patient to patient basis.

Please feel free to call the Atrial Fibrillation Clinic with any questions or concerns.

Your Atrial Fibrillation Team