Cardioverter Defibrillator Implantation
Care After Surgery (Implantation)

Please read the instructions outlined below and refer to this sheet in the next few weeks. These discharge instructions provide you with general information on caring for yourself after you leave the hospital. Your doctor may also give you specific instructions. While your treatment has been planned according to the most current medical practices available, unavoidable complications occasionally occur. If you have any problems or questions after discharge, please call your doctor.

HOME CARE INSTRUCTIONS

- Do not shower for a week after the procedure to keep the incision dry. You may take a sponge bath.
- Avoid excessively using the arm on the side the pacemaker was placed for a week.
- After a week, you may resume prior activities without limitations or do as instructed.
- Patients with an ICD should avoid powerful electromagnetic fields that may reprogram the device. *MRI* (magnetic resonance imaging) scans cannot be performed on patients with ICD's.
- Just as with pacemakers, these devices must be continually monitored. A device placed on the skin over the ICD can find out:
  - How the device has been programmed.
  - The status of the battery.
  - If any pacing or shocks were given and the heart rhythm that was treated.
- The programming of the ICD can be modified as needed to best suit the patient's needs. Routine monitoring will detect a battery that is nearing the end of its lifespan long before it gives out. When this happens, the old device is removed and a new device is implanted. The leads are usually left in place.
- If you feel a shock, you should generally report this to your caregiver immediately. Feeling one shock does not necessarily mean that you will have to be admitted to a hospital. Usually you will be asked to come into the office the next working day to see how the device is working. Multiple shocks may require admission to the hospital.

SEEK MEDICAL CARE IF:

- There is increased bleeding (more than a small spot) from the wound.
- You notice redness, swelling, or increasing pain in the wound.
- Pus is coming from wound.
- An unexplained oral temperature above 102° F (38.9° C) develops.
- You notice a foul smell coming from the wound or dressing.

SEEK IMMEDIATE MEDICAL CARE IF:

- You develop a rash.
- You have difficulty breathing
- You develop any reaction or side effects to medications given.

These devices are not perfect. Sometimes they deliver a shock for non threatening fast heart rates. It is always important to interrogate the device (find out why) after any shocks are felt. The programming or medicine may be altered based on what type of heart rhythm received the shock.

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