Pacemaker, Fractured Lead

Your pacemaker has a broken lead. A pacemaker is a device used for treating hearts with dangerously slow beats. Without treatment, a slow heart rate can lead to weakness, confusion, dizziness, and fainting. It can also cause shortness of breath and death.

A slow heart rate can be caused by problems with body metabolism. It can also be due to blocked arteries in the heart's *conduction system*. This is like the electrical wiring in your house. These conditions can often be treated and a normal heart rate will come back. Slow heart rates can also be a side effect of certain medications. Stopping the medicine or decreasing the dose may correct the problem.

The conduction system of the heart may become permanently damaged for many reasons. Some medications can cause a slow heart rate as a side effect. There are no long-term medications that can be taken to speed up the heart rate. A pacemaker is the only solution.

Please read the instructions below and refer to this sheet in the next few weeks. Your caregiver may also give you specific instructions. While your treatment has been planned according to the most current medical practices available, complications can occur. If you have any problems or questions after discharge, call your caregiver.

HOME CARE INSTRUCTIONS

- Do not shower for a week after the procedure to keep the incision dry.
- Avoid using the arm on the side the pacer was placed for the first week.
- After a week, you may resume prior activities.
- Household appliances do not interfere with modern day pacemakers.
- Digital cellular phones should be kept 12 inches away from the pacemaker when on. Use the ear on the opposite side of the pacemaker.
- Never leave a cell phone in a pocket overlying the pacemaker.

SEEK IMMEDIATE MEDICAL CARE IF:

- Any of the problems you had before the placement of the pacemaker return.
- You develop chest pain, feel faint, lightheaded, or pass out.

PATIENTS WITH PACEMAKERS SHOULD AVOID POWERFUL ELECTROMAGNETIC FIELDS THAT MAY REPROGRAM THE PACEMAKER. MRI (MAGNETIC RESONANCE IMAGING) SCANS CANNOT BE PERFORMED ON PATIENTS WITH PACEMAKERS.

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