

Patient information leaflet on
Permanent pacemaker

What is a Permanent pacemaker?

A Pacemaker is a small electrical device used to treat abnormal heart rhythms, it is implanted under skin in the chest. If your heart is beating too slow, this means you may have a problem with your hearts electrical conduction system and may be experiencing dizzy spells, blackouts, shortness of breath or palpitations. A Pacemaker helps to speed up your heart so that it beats at a normal rate.

Pre-admission Clinic

You will receive a letter inviting you to attend a pre-admission clinic at the Cardiac Investigations Department on the 1st floor in the Peterborough City Hospital.

During this appointment you will be seen by a cardiac nurse who will explain, in depth, what you can expect on procedure day and take a brief medical history, as well as blood samples, MRSA swabs and an electrocardiogram (ECG). It is necessary for you to bring all your current medication or a current prescription with you. You would be informed should you need to omit any medication prior to the procedure. A time will be arranged for you to arrive for your procedure. You are encouraged to express any concerns about the procedure at this appointment.

Preparation for the Procedure

On the day of your procedure, you will be admitted to the Coronary Angiography Suite. You are advised to have a light breakfast (usually two hours prior procedure) before coming in. Please note that friends and relatives will not be able to stay with you in the department on the day of your procedure. There are various waiting areas (restaurant, coffee shop etc) within the hospital where they can wait if they wish.

The Procedure

You'll be given IV antibiotics prior to the procedure to prevent any infections. The Pacemaker is inserted in our catheterisation lab and usually takes approximately 30 minutes- 1 hour. You will be given local anaesthetic under the area of your collar bone. The vein is located under the collar bone and the leads are then passed down. An x-ray is used to guide the lead through the vein and into your heart. The leads are secured into the heart and the pacemaker is attached. The pacemaker is placed under the skin and secured using dissolvable sutures and a waterproof dressing.

On Return to the Ward

After the procedure, you are monitored by the nursing team for 2 hours. The cardiac physiologists will check the pacemaker and you will have a chest X-Ray to check the position of the leads.

You will be given an appointment for your first pacing check which would be usually 6 weeks after the pacemaker was fitted. You will be issued a discharge letter as well as post Pacemaker discharge advice sheet.

Going Home

This test is usually performed as a day case. In the unlikely event of any complications, it is important that you have someone to stay with you for the first night following the test. You will have been advised during the Pre-Admission Clinic visit **avoid lifting the affected arm above shoulder height and avoid any heavy lifting for 6 weeks or drive for 1 week.** Inform the DVLA and your insurance company of your new pacemaker.

What are the Risks?

On rare occasions there can be complications such as:

- Bleeding and bruising especially around the area where the Pacemaker was inserted. This may be made worse if you take anti-coagulants.
- Risk of infection, however you are given a dose of antibiotics to prevent any infections occurring.
- Risk of Tamponade which is pressure on the heart caused by bleeding around the heart.
- Risk of Pneumothorax which is a puncture to the lung.
- Risk of lead displacement when the lead moves position causing a disruption to its function
- Risk of Venous Thrombus which is a blood clot.

For some patients the risks may be higher. Please speak to the consultant before the procedure if you have any concerns.

If you have any queries regarding this procedure please contact the Angiography Unit 01733 673793 where you had the procedure done between 8am and 5pm Monday to Friday.