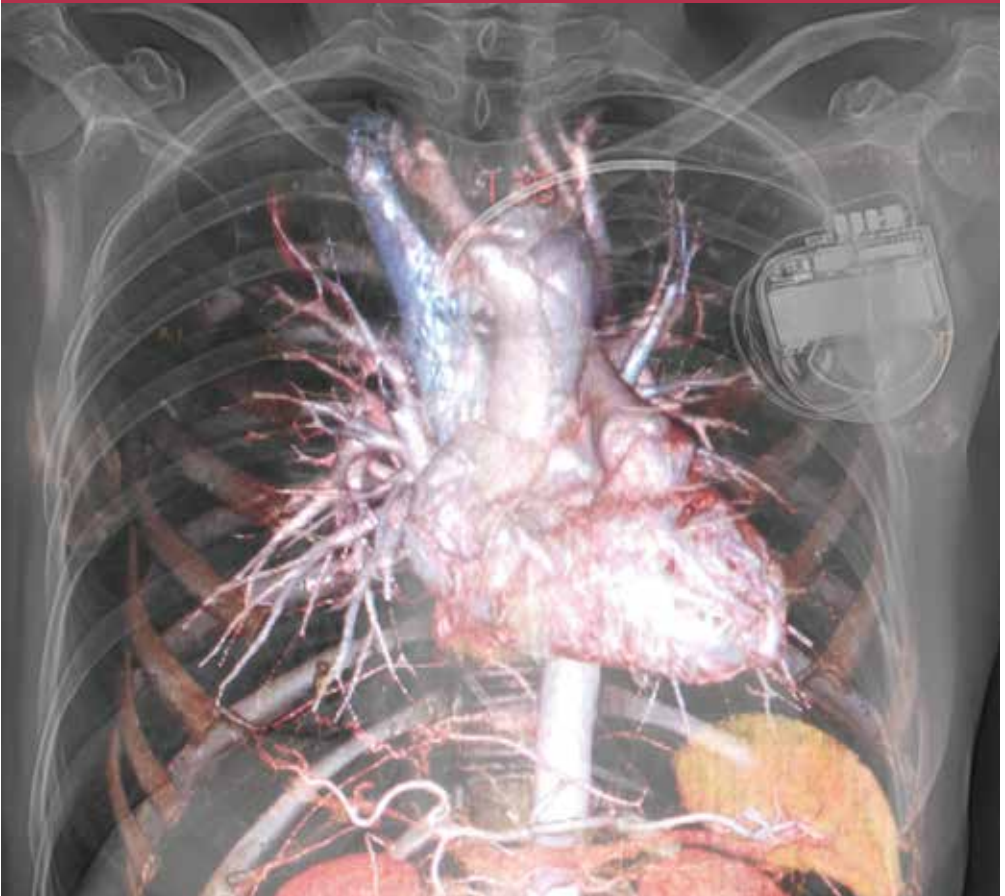


Keeping active at home Exercises and education following your pacemaker insertion

Information for patients



Introduction

Keeping active is important to stay healthy and independent. A pacemaker helps keep your heart beating safely at rest and during exercise. You should hopefully feel a difference in your ability to do exercise and activities of daily living that you may have found difficult before such as walking, housework or gardening.

Gradually increasing your level of physical activity can help you return to activities that are important for you. Being active does not always mean doing exercise – there are lots of ways to stay active by taking part in activities you enjoy.

This booklet aims to provide education and practical advice to help you recover from your recent pacemaker insertion

If you have not taken part in physical activity for a while, have any pre-existing health conditions or any injuries, please consult your GP before taking part in any activities.



Arrhythmia Alliance

Living with a pacemaker

General advice

www.heartrhythmalliance.org

Tel: 01789 867 501

https://www.heartrhythmalliance.org/aa/uk/pacemaker?gclid=EAlal-QobChMikYuh09zK9QIVENd3Ch0AyAsCEAYASAAEgJgbfD_BwE

Further support and information

British Heart Foundation

General advice

www.bhf.org.uk

Tel: 0300 330 3311

What is a pacemaker and how does it work?

<https://www.bhf.org.uk/information-support/treatments/pacemakers>

NHS Website

Pacemaker Implantation FAQs

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/pacemaker-implantation/recovery/>

Physical activity

What is physical activity?

Physical activity is anything that gets your body moving and increases your heart rate. This can vary depending on level of impact such as walking, gardening or participating in a sport.

How much physical activity should I be doing?

It is important to do some type of physical activity every day. This can include chores such as doing the housework, cooking and shopping

Importance of staying active

Taking part in physical activity can have positive lasting effects on your body both physically and mentally. Some tips to keeping motivated is:

- **Start of slow and build up the intensity/ duration.**
- **Doing it with a family member or friend for support.**
- **Do something you enjoy.**
- **Keep a diary of the activities you have done.**



Pacemaker advice

Sling

You need to keep the sling in place for 48 hours post-surgery (most likely your left arm). If at rest, you can prop your arm on a pillow to support it to allow you to take the sling off.

Movement of your shoulder

Please be careful with your shoulder and arm whilst the tissue underneath the dressing heals mainly for the first **6** weeks post-implantation. This includes not lifting your arm above shoulder height/ 90 degrees and not putting too much pressure through your shoulder and arm. In this booklet there are some upper limb exercises to help with moving your shoulder and preventing stiffness within this time period.

Heavy lifting

No heaving lifting is advised for 6 weeks post pacemaker to ensure the surgical site has healed properly and to prevent any complications with the pacemaker. This includes pushing up using your affected arm for example getting out of a chair.



Lower limb strengthening



Sideways leg swings

Start by standing. Lift one leg off the floor and take support if needed. Start swinging the leg in front of the other leg back and forth from one side towards the other side. Keep the movement relaxed. Repeat 10 times.

Leg swings forwards and backwards

Start by standing. Lift one leg off the floor and take support if needed. Start swinging the leg backwards and forwards. Keep the movement relaxed. Repeat 10 times on each leg.



Leg extension

Sit on a chair with the soles of your feet on the floor. Alternately straighten one knee, hold for a moment and lower the leg back down. Repeat 10 times.

Lower limb strengthening

Sit-to-stand

Sit in a chair with your back away from the back support. Shift your weight forwards and stand up by straightening your hips and knees. Only use your arms if needed. Sit back down controlling the movement. Repeat 10 times.



Squat

Stand tall with feet slightly wider than hip-width apart. Toes pointing forward or turned a few degrees outwards. Squat down by sitting back and bring your arms forward. Push back up through the heels, chest up, and straighten your hips. Repeat 10 times.



Heel raises

Stand tall, with your weight distributed evenly on both feet, and take support if needed. Rise onto your toes and in a controlled manner return to the starting position. Repeat 10 times.





Magnetic interference

Due to the magnets within the pacemaker, it is essential that you are cautious around electromagnetic devices. These include security gates, mobile phones placed near your chest, microwaves and induction hobs. You are still allowed to use these items, just take caution. For example, turn the microwave/hob on then walk away and don't wait near these items

Driving

The length of time required to suspend driving depends on your consultant's advice, which should be given to you during your admission. If you have any questions, your medical team will be happy to talk you through this.

Physical activity

It is important to keep active to a similar level prior to before your pacemaker was implanted. Most individuals will find that they receive less symptoms on exertion and therefore are able to complete daily activities which they struggled with before.

Upper limb exercises

Shoulder rolls

Roll your shoulders in circles forwards and backwards. Repeat 10 times.



Neck flexion/extension

Start by sitting with your shoulders and neck relaxed. Bring your chin towards your chest and look downwards. Slowly return to the centre. Bring your chin upwards to look at the ceiling then return to the centre.

Shoulder shrugs

Place your hand on the front of the opposite shoulder. Move your shoulder gently up and back. Control should position with your fingers. Bend your neck to the side. Hold for 10 seconds. Repeat 3 times on each side.



Sitting elbow flexion-extension

Sit on a chair with your arm straight and supported on the edge of the chair (palm facing upwards). Use a folded towel under the elbow. Bend and straighten your elbow slowly. Repeat 10 times.

Upper limb exercises

Pendulum swings

Lean forward in a chair or stand beside a table and lean on table for support. Let your arm extend straight down, gently swing your arm forwards and backwards. Repeat 10 times.



Shoulder raises

Stand up straight, with arms by your sides. Lift your arm 45 degrees to the side with the thumb leading the movement. Lower the arm back to the starting position. Repeat 10 times.

Supported shoulder rotation

Sit on a chair with your elbow bent and forearm supported out to the side on a table (palm facing inward). Use a folded towel under the forearm. Rotate your arm outward and inward. Repeat 10 times.



Further sources of information

NHS: <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/>

Our website: www.sfh-tr.nhs.uk

Patient Experience Team (PET)

PET is available to help with any of your compliments, concerns or complaints, and will ensure a prompt and efficient service.

King's Mill Hospital: 01623 672222

Newark Hospital: 01636 685692

Email: sfh-tr.PET@nhs.net

If you would like this information in an alternative format, for example large print or easy read, or if you need help with communicating with us, for example because you use British Sign Language, please let us know.

You can call the Patient Experience Team on 01623 672222 or email sfh-tr.PET@nhs.net.

This document is intended for information purposes only and should not replace advice that your relevant health professional would give you. External websites may be referred to in specific cases. Any external websites are provided for your information and convenience. We cannot accept responsibility for the information found on them. If you require a full list of references (if relevant) for this leaflet, please email sfh-tr.patientinformation@nhs.net or telephone 01623 622515, extension 6927.

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