

Your Immediate Recovery Following Your Pacemaker Implant Procedure

Two years ago, Donald Williams had a pacemaker implanted to control an abnormal heart rhythm. He recalls having a relatively easy recovery. He didn't even feel discomfort. But many people do.

If you experience discomfort right after your implant procedure, let the health care team know as soon as you notice it.

You should be able get up and walk around not long after the procedure, and go home within a couple of days. Your healthcare team will check the pacemaker one more time before you leave.

"And the reason we do that is to make sure the leads are in the right place, and that the device is functioning normally." - Gabriel Breuer, MD Cardiac Electrophysiologist

Your healthcare team will give you discharge instructions, which may include guidelines regarding incision care, medications, physical activity, and a schedule to follow for regular checkups. You won't be able to drive right away, so you'll need someone to take you home. Your healthcare team will let you know when it's ok to drive again.

After her pacemaker was implanted, Maria remembers feeling a little tired and sore when she returned home. That's normal.

"There was a little bit of discomfort in the area, because you have an incision that's about two inches long."
- Maria, Patient

For the first few weeks you'll need to take some precautions.

"When caring for your incision, it is important to keep it dry and clean. It is important not to apply any lotion, powder, or cream until the incision heals." - Gabriel Breuer, MD Cardiac Electrophysiologist

Other precautions:

Make sure you let your doctor know about any soreness, swelling, or redness near your incision.

Also, for the first month, avoid lifting anything heavier than 5 lbs. And don't lift your arm over your head on the side where the pacemaker is located. You should also avoid climbing ladders, using heavy machinery or doing anything else that would put you at risk if you were to become dizzy or lose consciousness.

"Eat it slowly, don't gobble it up..."

Though Donald Williams was eager to get back to all his normal activities after his pacemaker was implanted, he listened to doctors' orders and held off.

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"I did what I was told, and nothing happened. Everything seems fine, but you do have to follow instructions." – Donald, Patient

You will be able to return to most activities as soon as you feel up to it, or as your health care provider directs. Donald says it wasn't long before he could get back to life as normal.

"After the procedure, I got back on my bicycle, the real bike. I got back on my stationary bicycle. I went back into the gym and did my workouts, working slowly towards where the effort that I had been putting out prior to this, and everything turned out fine. Not a problem." – Donald, Patient