

Answers to Common Concerns About Getting a Heart Rhythm Device

Your healthcare provider has advised that you get a heart rhythm device. This may be a pacemaker or Implanted Cardioverter Defibrillator, also called an I-C-D. Having surgery to implant this device may be weighing on your mind.

To help ease your anxiety, focus on how the device will help your heart beat at a more normal rate and rhythm. So you can get back to the things you enjoy doing!

Knowing what to expect with the surgery can also help you feel less anxious and better prepared. Here are the facts behind some common concerns about getting a heart rhythm device.

How will I feel after the surgery?

If you've been living with symptoms like heart palpitations, dizziness, or shortness of breath, you'll feel much better after surgery. That's worth a fist pump!

At the same time, though, you'll likely have some pain where the device was put in your chest. It's hard to predict how much; everyone is different.

The good news: Any discomfort will get better over time, and your care team is well-equipped to help you manage it. Talk with your healthcare provider beforehand about the best ways to ease your pain.

What about the risks of surgery?

All surgeries have some risks, like the chance for an infection or a blood clot.

Having a heart rhythm device put in has some added concerns. These include possible problems with the device itself, such as the battery failing or a wire moving.

Keep in mind, though, these events are rare. And your care team has done lots of these surgeries and knows exactly how to keep you safe and healthy.

You can do your part, too, by following all pre- and post-procedure instructions. And if you have any questions, ask away!

What will life be like after surgery?

Truth is, it may take some time for you to get used to living with your heart rhythm device. You'll need to start taking new medicines, seeing your provider regularly for device checkups, and learning how to keep your device away from things that can interfere with it, like your cell phone and metal detectors.

If you get an I-C-D, you may also be worried about getting shocked.

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All these changes can be overwhelming. If you feel stressed or sad, be kind to yourself and tell your care team. They can help you cope.

And remember this: Getting a heart rhythm device will help you live a longer, fuller life.

Still have questions or concerns? Get in touch with your care team to learn more about what you can do to make your surgery a success.