

6

# Pacemaker Insertion

Patient name: \_\_\_\_\_ Admission: \_\_\_\_\_

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- I. The client/caregiver can define a pacemaker.**
  - A. It provides an artificial electrical stimulus to the heart muscle to control or maintain a regular rhythm heartbeat.
  - B. It consists of a battery-powered pulse generator and a catheter electrode that is inserted into the right side of the heart or ventricle.
  - C. A pacemaker can be temporary (external) or permanent (internal).
  
- II. The client/caregiver can list and describe two types of pacemakers.**
  - A. A demand-rate pacemaker generates an electrical stimulus only if the heart rate falls below a preset level.
  - B. A fixed-rate pacemaker is set at a certain rate and constantly creates electrical stimuli regardless of the heart's rhythm.
  
- III. The client/caregiver can list measures for pacemaker management.**
  - A. Monitor the pulse at rest as instructed by physician, and report rate if less than set amount.
  - B. Report fatigue, shortness of breath, palpitations, dizziness, chest pain, and so forth.
  - C. Assess wound and report signs and symptoms of infection (i.e., redness, tenderness, drainage, and fever).
  - D. Avoid any type of trauma to pulse generator.
    - 1. Avoid constrictive clothing.
    - 2. Avoid bumping pulse generator.
    - 3. Avoid contact sports.
  - E. Follow postoperative activity as ordered.
    - 1. Resume driving, sexual relations, exercise, and so forth as ordered by physician.

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- 2. Most activities can be resumed in 4 to 6 weeks.
- 3. Perform range of motion exercises as instructed to affected shoulder.
  
- IV. The client/caregiver can explain special instructions for pacemaker care.**
  - A. Show pacemaker card at airport security checks.
  - B. Inform any health care provider (i.e., dentist, technicians, and physician) of pacemaker.
  - C. Carry a pacemaker identity card that includes
    - 1. Pacemaker model and leads
    - 2. Pacemaker settings
    - 3. Date of insertion, name of surgeon, and hospital with contact telephone numbers
  - D. Follow precautions around electricity and strong magnetic fields.
    - 1. Avoid areas of high voltage such as power plants, radio transmitters, large industrial magnets, and certain antitheft alarm systems.
    - 2. Ground home appliances.
    - 3. Avoid magnetic resonance imaging.
    - 4. Avoid resting cellular telephone on chest over site of generator.
  - E. Wear Medic Alert bracelet.
  
- V. The client/caregiver can state need for follow-up care.**
  - A. Keep follow-up appointments with physician and with pacemaker clinic evaluations.
  - B. Keep appointment for battery checks, which may be done at the hospital or at home via telephone system.
  - C. Change battery as needed (most last 5 to 10 years).

(Continued)

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VI. The client/caregiver is aware of signs and symptoms of possible complications.

- A. Infection
- B. Pacemaker malfunction
- C. Bleeding
- D. Cardiac dysrhythmias

**RESOURCES**

The American Heart Association  
800-242-8721  
[www.aha.org](http://www.aha.org)  
Manufacturer of the pacemaker

**REFERENCES**

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