

## **Cardioversion Procedure Pre and Post Instructions**

Cardioversion is a procedure used to convert an irregular or abnormal heart rhythm to a normal heart rhythm by applying high energy shock. Common rhythms that may require elective cardioversion include atrial fibrillation, atrial flutter and ventricular tachycardia.

### ***Preparation***

- Do not eat or drink anything after midnight the evening before your procedure. If you must take medications, drink only small sips of water to help you swallow your pills.
- Take all your medications as prescribed. If you are diabetic, check with the office about how to adjust your diabetic medications. If you are on a blood thinner (anticoagulant), we may give you specific directions regarding this medication for the procedure, and the weeks leading up to the procedure.
- Wear comfortable clothes. You will wear a hospital gown during the procedure. It is best not to wear any jewelry or valuables.
- Most likely, you will be able to go home after the procedure. You should bring someone with you to drive you home after the procedure.

### ***Procedure***

- You will lie on a bed and the nurse will start an intravenous (IV) line into your arm or hand. This is so you may receive medications and fluids during the procedure.
- The nurse will connect you to several monitors. Electrode patches will be attached to your chest and upper back. Men may have their chest hair shaved for electrode placement.
- A medication will be given to you through your IV to make you fall asleep.
- While you are asleep, the doctor will use a special machine (external cardiac defibrillator) that delivers specific amounts of energy through the patches to your heart muscle to restore a normal heart rhythm. Although this procedure only takes a few seconds, more than one attempt may be needed.

In some people, a moderately invasive imaging test called a transesophageal echocardiogram (TEE) may be performed prior to the cardioversion to make sure the heart is free from blood clots. The TEE is performed by swallowing a narrow tube with an ultrasound camera at its tip that can be placed against the back wall of the heart.

### ***Recovery***

- You will gradually wake up. You will be told whether the cardioversion was successful in converting your heart rhythm to normal. We will discuss your medications, when to return for follow-up appointments and other treatment options with you, if necessary.
- Most patients may go home after the procedure. A companion should drive you home.
- Some chest wall tenderness may be present for a few days after your cardioversion. You may have some redness, like a sunburn, as well on your chest and/or back.
- If you have any questions about your cardioversion, please call our office.

### ***Health Maintenance***

Regardless of the results of your study and the course of treatment your provider recommends, you play an important role in staying healthy. Be sure to keep all appointments for exams and follow-up tests. Follow your instructions, do not hesitate to talk about your concerns, and immediately report any new symptoms

## **Discharge Instructions**

### ***Call if you experience:***

- Chest pain or shortness of breath.
- Lightheadedness, dizziness or palpitations.

### ***DO:***

- Light activity on the day of discharge
- Continue to take previous medications including Coumadin (warfarin), Eliquis, Xarelto, Pradaxa, Savaysa or other blood thinners unless instructed otherwise at discharge.
- You may use cortisone cream as directed by your physician if skin irritation occurs where the cardioversion pads were placed. This is available at your local pharmacy or grocery store.

### ***DON'T:***

- NO DRIVING FOR 24 HOURS AFTER THIS PROCEDURE.

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