

Information for patients, parents or carers

Implantable loop recorder

An implantable loop recorder is a small device put under the skin of your chest that records the electrical signals from your heart. This information leaflet has been produced as an aid to explain why it's needed, what to expect when it's fitted, and following discharge from hospital.

Why is a loop recorder needed

Your consultant will have suggested an implantable loop recorder because you have had some unexplained symptoms, such as your heart racing, fainting or collapses and that monitoring your heart rhythm on a longer basis might be helpful.

Using this recorder, we can understand if you are having any heart rhythm changes that need treatment or can explain your symptoms. This is especially helpful if your symptoms are very irregular and wearing even a long-term ECG monitor hasn't worked.

The loop recorder can stay in place for up to three years. Once the doctors know what is causing your symptoms, they may decide to start treatment, replace or remove the loop recorder.

Fitting a loop recorder

You will have your loop recorder fitted under general anaesthetic. Your doctor will explain all about the procedure and ask you and your parents to sign a form giving permission for the procedure to happen this is called the consent form.

During the procedure, the doctor will put the recorder under the skin on your chest and check that it is working properly. The device is about the size of half an ice lolly stick. It records what happens to your heart when you are having these unexplained symptoms i.e. heart racing or fainting.

You will need to have the device put in during a short operation, whilst you are asleep under general anaesthetic. This means you will not feel anything or know what is happening. It can be normal to feel a bit sick or dizzy after an anaesthetic, this will not last long, and we can give you medication to help with this. Following the procedure and once recovered, you will be allowed to go home (or discharged) from hospital that same day.

Your chest might feel a bit sore; this is to be expected, and you can take some pain medicine to help with this i.e. paracetamol. The operation site will be closed with stitches under the skin, which dissolve over time. Before discharge, we advise that you take a picture of your child's wound so if you have any concerns i.e. infection, you can email this picture to the cardiac rhythm nurse specialist to compare with a picture of what has made you concerned.

Going home

You will be able to go home when the doctor is happy that your recorder is working correctly, and you are feeling better after the general anaesthetic.

Please take your dressing off 2 days after the procedure. Try not to soak the wound after you take the dressing off and avoid scrubbing or soaking the wound, until fully healed. You can go back to having a normal bath or shower a week after the procedure if the scar has healed, your specialist nurse will discuss this on your telephone appointment one week post procedure.

We ask you to check the operation site regularly for the first couple of weeks to look out for signs of infection for example:

- Is it red?
- Does it look angry or inflamed?
- Is the wound open, is it oozing?

If this is the case please contact the rhythm specialist nurse for advice immediately, out of hours please ring Ward 23 (phone numbers at the end of this leaflet).

After you have had the procedure, try to spend the next few days quietly at home. You need time to get better after the operation.

You can start sports and games one week later. Try to avoid being knocked in your chest as it may hurt. Discuss with your cardiac rhythm specialist nurse or your consultant about contact sports.

The specialist nurse will phone you about a week after the operation, as part of your follow up care. They will ask how you are feeling, check that the wound is healing well, and ensure you have received your in-person follow-up appointment.

The operation site will be swollen and a bit red and it might also be bruised. Gradually, this will go down over the next three or four weeks. Once the swelling has improved, you might be able to feel or see the outline of your recorder, but this is normal. As you know it is there, you might feel or see it more than other people, who even notice.

Your follow up appointment in person will be planned (usually 3 months post discharge), and your wound will be checked at this time also.

Things to remember;

Do not have a shower have a shallow bath instead for the first seven days while the wound is healing. Wash your hair over the sink for the first week. Once it has healed, you can wash your operation site gently with water, but pat it dry rather than rubbing it.

Before you leave hospital a member of the Cardiac Rhythm Management Department will come and introduce themselves to you, show you how the loop recorder works, assist you in deciding whether you would like to download the monitoring app to your phone or have the home monitoring device.

What to do if you have symptoms

It's important to download your recording soon after having symptoms. The device can only record two to four episodes (depending on the length of episode), therefore, it is important to download the information and transfer it to us as soon as possible. Let us know when you have transferred data

across, so we are able to assess it, if you are unwell during any of these symptoms it is imperative that you seek immediate medical attention.

Please also keep a written record of your symptoms. For example, please include the date, time, duration and a brief description of the symptoms you are experiencing. This will be helpful for the Cardiac Rhythm Management Department, as well as your specialist nurse and consultant.

If you have any problems with your device

You can refer to the information booklet that comes with your device about any troubleshooting, or alternatively you can contact the Cardiac Rhythm Management Team for further support (See contact details under further information and support).

Further information and support

Ward 23 Freeman Hospital: 0191 2137023 (24 hours)

Paediatric Rhythm and ICC Nurse Specialist: 0191 213 9633

Children's Cardiac Nurse Specialist: 0191 213 7344

Email address: nuth.ccns@nhs.net

The Cardiac Nurse Specialists are around 09.00am to 5.00pm Monday to Friday. If there is no answer please leave a voicemail, and they will endeavour to return your call within 24 hours. If urgent, please contact ward 23, Freeman Hospital for advice.

Cardiac Rhythm Management Department: 0191 213 8048

The Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) can offer on-the-spot advice and information about the NHS. You can contact them on freephone 0800 032 02 02 or email pals@nhct.nhs.uk.

https://www.northumbria.nhs.uk/patients-and-visitors/share-your-feedback/patient-and_advice-liaison-service-pals#9882d87e

Useful websites If you would like further information about health conditions and treatment options, you may wish to look at the NHS website at www.nhs.uk.

You may also want to look at <https://www.chuf.org.uk/>

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