

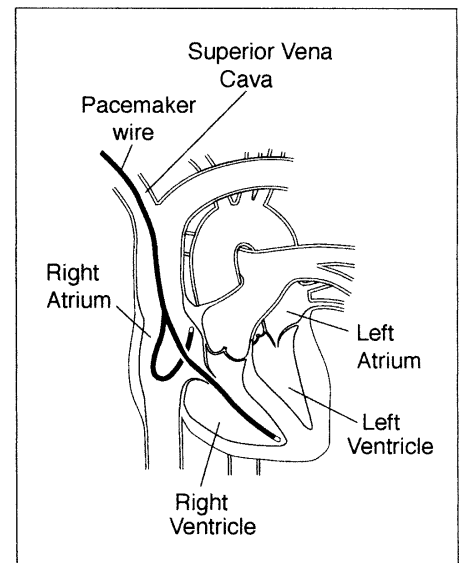
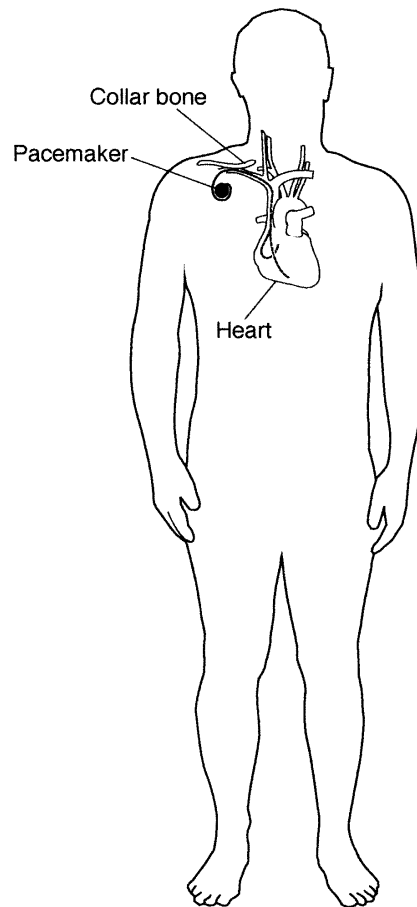
# Pacemaker

A pacemaker is a small device that helps control your heart rate by:

- Speeding up the heart rate when it is too slow
- Slowing down the heart rate when it is too fast
- Helping the heart beat regular if it is irregular

A pacemaker is placed in the chest during surgery. Wires called leads are put into the heart muscle. The device with the battery is placed under your skin, below your shoulder.

An adult family member or friend needs to come with you to take you home after your surgery. It is not safe for you to drive or leave alone. Have an adult stay with you at home for the first day after your surgery.



**Arrive on time for your appointment.** The surgery will take 1-2 hours.

## To Prepare

- Talk to your doctor if you take blood thinners or have diabetes.
- Do not eat or drink anything, including water, after midnight before your surgery.
- Ask your doctor if you should take your medicines the morning of your surgery. If so, take with sips of water only.

## **During Surgery**

- You will wear a hospital gown.
- An IV (intravenous) is put in a vein in your arm. Medicines to make you sleepy are given through the IV.
- Your neck or chest is cleaned. Men may have their chests shaved.
- The skin is numbed.
- The wire leads are put into a vein and guided into your heart using an x-ray.
- The wire leads are placed in your heart muscle.
- The other end of each wire is connected to the pacemaker.
- The pacemaker is placed in a small space under your skin.
- The incisions are closed with stitches.
- Bandages or strips of tape cover both sites.

## **After Surgery**

### **In the Hospital**

- An ice pack may be put on the sites.
- Your blood pressure, heart rate and incisions will be checked often.
- The head of your bed is raised. Do not lift your arm over your head on the same side where your pacemaker is placed.
- If you have discomfort, ask your nurse for pain medicine.
- You will have a chest x-ray to check your lungs and the pacemaker.
- Antibiotics are given in your IV to prevent infection.

A nurse will explain how your pacemaker works, answer any questions and explain pacemaker checks. You will not be able to feel your pacemaker working. You will be able to see and feel the outline of the pacemaker through your skin. Do not rub the pacemaker site.

### **At Home**

- Schedule an appointment with your doctor for follow-up care.
- Talk to your doctor about activity limits. Your doctor may tell you to:
  - Limit the movement of your arm on the side of the pacemaker.
  - Not lift this arm above your head.
  - Not push, pull or lift anything heavier than 10 pounds or 4 kilograms.
  - Not return to work or drive.
- You may shower. Let the water run over your incision, but do not scrub the site. Pat dry.

- Do not use lotion or powder on the incision.

### **Other Information:**

- Tell all of your health care providers, including your dentist, that you have a pacemaker.
- Carry the ID card your doctor gave you. This card has information about your pacemaker.
- Stay away from large magnets, such as those used for MRI tests.
- Avoid leaning into a car engine or doing welding.
- Use cell phones on the opposite ear of where your pacemaker is placed.
- It is safe to use household appliances like microwave ovens, computers, toasters, hairdryers, and heating pads.
- You can safely pass through security at airports. Be sure to have your pacemaker ID card with you.

Call your doctor **right away** if you have:

- A temperature over 101 degrees F or 38 degrees C
- Swelling of your feet or ankles
- Tenderness around your pacemaker that gets worse
- Redness, swelling or drainage around your stitches
- Stitches that come apart
- Chills
- A cough
- Weakness or feel tired
- Skin that is itchy, swollen or has a rash
- Sadness

Call 911 **right away** if:

- You feel faint or are too dizzy to stand.
- You have chest pain that does not go away after a few minutes.
- Your bandage becomes soaked in blood.
- You have trouble breathing.

**Talk to your doctor or nurse if you have any questions or concerns.**