



## Cardiology

### Pacemakers

A pacemaker is a surgically implanted device that regulates heart rhythm. A normal heart can beat from 60 to 100 beats per minute at rest. An electrical signal results in the heartbeat. Any interruption of the normal flow of electrical signals causes an abnormal heart beat. When the heart beats too slow or too quick, blood flow to the body will decrease. This can lead to dizziness, fainting, difficulty in breathing and chest pain. When abnormal heart rhythms cannot be corrected by medication, a pacemaker may be necessary.

#### Preparing for Pacemaker Insertion

1. Because this is a surgical procedure, the risks and benefits of receiving a pacemaker will be explained thoroughly to you.
2. Do not eat or drink after midnight of the evening before the procedure.
3. Take medications with small sips of water. Your nurse or physician will provide specific instructions. Be sure to inform doctor if you are on Coumadin. This will need to be held for two days. If you are taking medication for diabetes, these should be stopped the night before the procedure.
4. Prepare to stay in the hospital over night. If you are having a battery replacement you will be able to go home the day of the procedure.

#### What to Expect

1. Your upper chest will be cleaned and shaved if necessary.
2. The area where the incision will be made is numbed. (You will be awake during the procedure.) The doctor will give you medication to help you relax and remain free of pain.
3. The doctor will make a small incision and guides the pacemaker wires through a large blood vessel to the heart.
4. The doctor will use a special x-ray called fluoroscopy to position the leads correctly on the heart muscle and a pocket is made under the skin to fit the pulse generator.
5. The leads are connected to the pulse generator and the pocket is closed.
6. Heart rhythm, blood pressure and pulse will be monitored throughout the procedure.

#### After the Procedure

You may be sore after the procedure. Over the counter pain medications may be sufficient to make you feel comfortable. However, your doctor can prescribe stronger pain medications. You will need to keep the incision site dry for about five days and watch for redness, swelling, drainage, fever or chills. For any of these symptoms, please call your doctor. You may not raise affected arm above shoulder height for 1-2 weeks. Though you may go back to your usual activities after pacemaker insertion, avoid strenuous activities or lifting more than ten pounds for at least four to six weeks. You will follow up in the office one week after pacemaker implant for suture removal. Contact the office immediately for drainage from the site, redness or heat or fever. These may be signs of infection that need to be treated immediately.

**Date of Procedure** \_\_\_\_\_ **Hospital** \_\_\_\_\_

Your follow up appointment is scheduled on \_\_\_\_\_ at \_\_\_\_\_.

Thank you for allowing the cardiologists of the Florida Medical Clinic to participate in your healthcare needs.