

## Patient information

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This information can be provided in a different language or format (e.g. large print, Braille or audio version) on request.

This is a smokefree Trust. Smoking is not allowed in any of our hospital buildings or grounds.

The Trust will not tolerate aggression, intimidation or violence.

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Basildon, Essex SS16 5NL  
01268 524900

Minicom: 01268 593190

www.basildonandthurrock.nhs.uk

Patient Advice and  
Liaison Service (PALS)  
01268 394440  
Email: pals@btuh.nhs.uk

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## Implantable loop recorder (ILR)

Following your recent discussion with your doctor or nurse, it has been arranged for you to have an implantable loop recorder (ILR).

This leaflet will give you general information about implantable loop recorders and what you can expect, there may be slight variations in care pathways, this will be dependent upon whether you are having your ILR at Basildon Hospital or the Essex Cardiothoracic Centre.

Most of your questions should be answered by this leaflet. It is not intended to replace the discussion between you and your doctor or nurse. If after reading it you have any concerns or require further explanation, please discuss this with a member of the healthcare team caring for you.

### How the heart works

The heart is a muscular pump which delivers blood containing oxygen to the body. It is divided into two upper chambers (atria) which collect blood returning through the veins; and two lower chambers (ventricles) which pump blood out.

The heart has an electrical system. This normally drives the heart to beat in a regular organised way, at a rate of 60-100 beats per minute.

Each normal heart beat begins with an electrical impulse from a group of specialist cells called the sinus node (SA node). These electrical impulses travel across the top two chambers of the heart (atria), down through the atrioventricular node (AV node), then

spread across the bottom chambers (ventricles), causing the heart to contract and pump.

When a heart is beating normally we refer to this as sinus rhythm, or normal rhythm.

Sometimes the electrical system in the heart does not follow the normal electrical conduction system causing an irregular or abnormal heart beat; the medical term for this is 'arrhythmia'. Sometimes an arrhythmia can cause symptoms, for example palpitations, skipped beats, dizziness, fatigue or fainting. A small number of arrhythmias can increase the risk of a serious event such as stroke.

If you are experiencing symptoms such as fainting or palpitations and no cause has been identified, your doctor or nurse may recommend an implantable loop recorder.

### What is an implantable loop recorder (ILR)?

An implantable loop recorder is a cardiac monitor and has several uses, including looking for causes of fainting, palpitations, very fast or slow heartbeats, and hidden rhythms that can cause strokes. You will be able to activate the ILR yourself if you experience the symptoms for which you are having the device implanted for. The ILR will also store automatic recordings, if your heart rate goes too fast, slow or becomes irregular. The ILR will be managed by the pacemaker clinic, all the recordings will be downloaded and analysed

by a cardiac physiologist (specialist in monitoring the heart using diagnostic equipment), if needed the recordings will be reviewed by a consultant cardiologist.

The majority of downloads can be sent from your home using remote monitoring if you have consented for this to happen. Attendance to a pacing clinic appointment is rarely a necessity, but may be required to change the settings in the ILR.

There is more than one model of implantable loop recorder, all models work in the same way but there may be some small differences such as where the device is implanted and how it is activated. You will be given advice and instructions specific to the model you will be having by the nurses and cardiac physiologists looking after you

### Points to note

- If required, a date will be arranged for you to have a pre-admission assessment. This will take place at either Basildon Hospital or the Essex Cardiothoracic Centre. A nurse will take some details to make sure you are well enough to have your procedure. Your blood pressure, ECG, weight and pulse will be checked.
- Part of your pre-assessment appointment may include seeing a nurse who will discuss your procedure with you and answer any questions you may have.
- You will be asked for an email address or mobile telephone number during your pre-assessment appointment (if you do not have a smart mobile phone please advise the nurse)

You will be given an information governance consent form to take home and complete. You will need to bring the completed form with you on the day of your procedure if you wish to use the remote monitoring facility of the ILR.

- If you have any special needs or requirements, please tell the nurse during your pre-admission assessment appointment.
- Sometimes sedation will be used during the procedure, you will need to arrange for somebody to bring you to the hospital and collect you by car or taxi on the day of your operation. If you are given sedation you will not be able to drive yourself home and you will not be able to drive or travel by public transport for 24 hours following discharge.

- Unless you require someone to stay with you during your admission to interpret or to assist with special needs, we ask that relatives or friends return to collect you when you are ready to go home and that an adult is able to stay with you overnight.
- If you take warfarin, please bring your INR results with you to the pre-assessment clinic.
- If you need ambulance transport on the day of your procedure because of your medical condition please contact us the following details;

If you are being admitted to Basildon Hospital , please contact the waiting list coordinator on 01268 524900 extn 4536

If you are being admitted to the Essex Cardiothoracic Centre, please contact the Patient Activity Office on 01268 524900 extn 4191/2

### On the day of your procedure please remember:

- To bring all your medication, in its original container
- To bring something to read such as a book or newspaper.
- Requiring an overnight stay in hospital would be very unusual, however we ask that you please bring an overnight bag with your preferred nightwear, dressing gown, slippers and toiletries.
- For security reasons please do not bring anything that is valuable with you into hospital. The hospital regrets that it cannot accept responsibility for loss or damage to property belonging to patients.
- Please do not wear jewellery, makeup or nail varnish. Your wedding ring may be left on if you wish and we will cover it with tape.
- You are able to have an early breakfast and morning medication on the day of your admission but please do not eat or drink after 7am.
- Bring your completed and signed information governance consent form and smart phone.

### Should I take my normal medication?

- Unless advised by the nurse at your preadmission assessment appointment, you should take all your usual medication.

- You may be taking medications that need to be withheld prior to your procedure. If so this will be discussed and explained to you during your preadmission assessment.
- If you are diabetic the management of your diabetes and your diabetic medication will be discussed with you during your preadmission assessment.

### **What happens on the day of the procedure?**

- You should attend the relevant department as specified on your admission letter. This will be the Cardiac Day Unit at Basildon Hospital or Thames ward at the Essex Cardiothoracic Centre.
- You will be provided with a gown to wear and you will be fitted with a wristband with your details on. This is so that staff can identify you correctly and give you the right care. It is important that you do not remove it until you go home.
- A nurse will check your blood pressure, pulse, temperature and oxygen levels, if needed a blood sample may be taken to make sure it is not too thin.
- If necessary, a nurse may clip any excess chest hair around the area for insertion.
- A small tube (cannula) will be inserted into a vein in your arm, so that you can be given drugs intravenously if required.
- You will be seen by either a doctor or specialist nurse who will ensure that you are fit to proceed with the implantable loop recorder and that you understand the procedure and the potential risks and benefits. You will need to sign a consent form.
- If you have any questions or concerns during this process, please ask.

### **What happens during the procedure?**

- Your procedure will take place in either the catheter laboratory at Basildon Hospital or a designated room on Thames ward at the Essex Cardiothoracic Centre.
- You will be asked to lie on your back with support for your head. We will do our best to make you as comfortable as possible. If you become short of breath while lying down we can give you oxygen to help your breathing.

- Your chest will be cleaned with antiseptic which will feel quite cold for a few seconds. Sterile drapes will cover your chest apart from the area identified for insertion of the device.
- Typically only a local anaesthetic is required, this will be injected at the insertion site. Sedation will be given through the cannula only if necessary.
- Implantable loop recorders are implanted either in the middle of the chest directly above the heart or below the left collar bone, depending upon the device model.
- A small incision is made at the insertion site and the ILR is implanted or injected (according to device model).
- The wound will be closed using an appropriate closure technique.
- The procedure should take no longer than 30 minutes.

### **What happens after the procedure?**

- You will be given some time to recover as needed and will be provided with something to eat and drink.
- Nursing staff will check your wound site for any signs of bleeding and provide wound care advice
- A cardiac physiologist will check your device and make sure it is working properly. They will provide specific information and instruction about your device, how to activate the device if you experience symptoms and how your device will be monitored.
- They will discuss remote monitoring from home if appropriate and obtain your consent for this to happen.

### **Are there any side effects or possible complications?**

- Sometimes bleeding can occur from the insertion site.
- You may experience some bruising around the insertion site which should get better in a few days.
- There is a very small risk of infection at the insertion site.
- The local anaesthetic or sedation used for the procedure may cause a reaction. Complications are very rare and can be dealt with by the nurses caring for you.

## What happens when I leave hospital?

- You should be able to return to normal activity when you feel able, usually within 1-2 days.
- If you experience discomfort at the wound site regular painkillers such as paracetamol can help. Any discomfort should settle quickly.
- You should observe your wound site for the first 1-2 weeks to ensure it is healing well. If you develop any inflammation, redness or fluid leaking from the site please seek advice as specified below:

If you are under the care of Basildon Hospital please contact the cardiac Day Unit at Basildon Hospital on 01268 394536

If you are under the care of the Essex Cardiothoracic Centre please contact the arrhythmia nurses on : 01268 394021

Monitoring of your implantable loop recorder will be managed by the pacing clinic. If you have any technical queries about your device please contact the pacing and ICD clinic on the details below.

For appointment queries and transport requests call 01268 394516

For all other queries: 01268 524 900 ext 4019

Email: [btu-tr.essexcrm@nhs.net](mailto:btu-tr.essexcrm@nhs.net)

## What if I decide not to have the implantable loop recorder?

The alternative to having an implantable loop recorder is to use a heart monitor (externally worn recorder), which you may have tried already.

The maximum time period that a heart monitor can be worn for is 1-2 weeks. If your symptoms occur less often than this then the information needed for a diagnosis will not be obtained.

Without the correct information your doctor will be unable to prescribe treatment for you. It would be up to your doctor to decide if they want to continue trying to capture abnormal events using this method. This could cause a delay in diagnosis and treatment.

## Where can I find further information?

Arrhythmia Nurses, Essex Cardiothoracic Centre  
Tel: 01268 394021

Email: [arrhythmia.nurses@btuh.nhs.uk](mailto:arrhythmia.nurses@btuh.nhs.uk)

Cardiac Day Unit Basildon Hospital  
Tel: 01268 394536

Pacing and ICD Clinic, Essex Cardiothoracic Centre

Appointment queries and transport requests  
Tel: 01268 394516

All other queries call 01268 524 900 ext 4019  
Email: [btu-tr.essexcrm@nhs.net](mailto:btu-tr.essexcrm@nhs.net)

STARS Syncope Trust And Reflex anoxic Seizures  
[www.stars.org.uk](http://www.stars.org.uk)

Atrial Fibrillation Association [www.afa.org.uk](http://www.afa.org.uk)

Arrhythmia Alliance - The Heart Rhythm Charity  
[www.heartrhythmcharity.org.uk](http://www.heartrhythmcharity.org.uk)

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)  
Tel: 01268 394440  
Email: [pals@btuh.nhs.uk](mailto:pals@btuh.nhs.uk)  
[www.basildonandthurrock.nhs.uk](http://www.basildonandthurrock.nhs.uk)

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## Other information and notes

This area can be used to note down any information that you may find helpful, or any questions you want to ask.
