

Why is a Pacemaker

What is a

Necessary?

Pacemaker?

A pacemaker is used to correct a form of abnormal heart rhythm (arrhythmia) in which the heart beats too slowly (bradycardia). Pacemakers can, in some instances, improve the heart's output of blood and can be used to help treat congestive heart failure.

For patients with documented life-threatening heart rhythms such as ventricular tachycardia or ventricular fibrillation, automatic implantable cardio-defibrillators (AICD) are used to treat such rhythms. AICDs are also indicated for patients judged to be at high risk for sudden death.

A pacemaker is a device implanted into a patient's chest to send electrical signals to the heart, telling it when to contract (or beat). It is minimally invasive surgery and is done under local anesthesia. It generally takes less than 45 minutes.

After the area under the patient's collarbone is numbed, a small incision is made (usually about 3 inches long,) and a "pocket" is fashioned in the tissue overlying the muscle. The leads are inserted through a vein near the site of the pocket, and advanced into the heart using fluoroscopy (x-rays) for guidance. The leads are then attached to the generator, the generator is placed in the pocket, and the incision is closed.

Pacemakers are flexible devices, and can vary their function according to the exact needs of the patient. Pacemakers can be programmed non-invasively, with a handheld device that communicates with the pacemaker through the skin. The programming can be repeated as often as necessary if the patient's underlying heart rhythm problem changes.

Special Instructions Before Your Procedure

Please arrive one hour prior to your scheduled surgery time.

- 1) Report to _____
on _____
at _____
- 2) Nothing to eat or drink for 12 hours before your surgery.

- 4) Your doctor will tell you about any medications you may need to stop before the procedure.

Your follow-up appointment has been scheduled for

_____ at _____.

