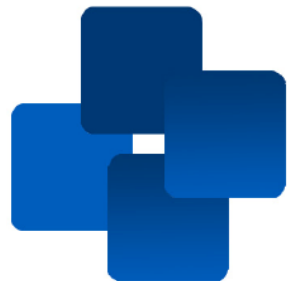


Patient Information

Loop Recorder Implant (under local anaesthetic)

Cardiac Suite
Cardiology Department



Introduction

The purpose of this leaflet is to provide you with information regarding the insertion of your implantable loop recorder device, and to give you guidance for after the procedure.

What is an implantable loop recorder (ILR)?

An implantable loop recorder (ILR) is a small slim device that records your heart's electrical activity. The loop recorder device is placed under the skin in your left upper chest area. This is useful if simple tests like an ECG have been unable to determine the cause of your symptoms.

Why do I need an ILR?

You may have experienced some or all of these symptoms with an undetermined cause:

- Palpitations
- Dizzy spells
- Blackouts

The benefit of having an implantable loop recorder is that it constantly monitors your heart activity, unlike an ECG or 24 hour ECG monitor, making it more likely to identify a cause of your symptoms. It can stay in for up to three years. In addition to this, a loop recorder may be implanted following a stroke diagnosis. This is used to detect an abnormal heart rhythm called 'atrial fibrillation' that is known to increase your risk of stroke.

How does an ILR work?

An ILR works together with a small hand-held 'activator'. The activator is used to record information from the ILR.

When you experience symptoms, place the activator over your ILR and press a button to start the recording. Your ILR will record your heart's activity. This information is stored for your doctor or cardiac physiologist to look at. If you are concerned about any of your symptoms and you have to activate the device, please inform the Pacemaker Clinic on **01438 781742**.

It's important to use the activator whenever you have symptoms so that the medical staff can see what's happening to your heart rhythm when you feel unwell.

What happens on the day the implantable loop recorder is to be inserted?

The procedure will take place in the Cardiac Suite (Level 2, light green zone). You will receive a letter which will confirm the date and time of your appointment. Please arrange for someone to take you and collect you from the hospital.

You must not eat anything for 3 hours before your procedure. Clear fluids can be drunk up until you have your procedure. If you are diabetic (on medication), you must contact your diabetic specialist nurse to be given specific instructions relating to your medication. Alternatively, you can contact the **Cardiac Suite** on **01438 284745**.

We may advise you to stop taking some medications that affect your blood clotting 24-48 hours before your procedure. The medications that are usually stopped are Warfarin or similar oral anticoagulants, such as Apixaban, Dabigatran, Edoxaban or Rivaroxaban. Your referring cardiologist will decide whether you should continue or stop any medication before the procedure.

How is the loop recorder implanted?

The procedure normally takes 20 – 30 minutes.

Local anesthetic will be injected into the skin. This can sting at first but makes the skin numb so that you will not be able to feel any pain or discomfort. A small incision (around 1cm) will be made to make space for the device to sit comfortably under the skin.

The device will be placed under the skin; for some patients this can be uncomfortable due to the stretching of the skin. Dissolvable sutures or skin glue are then used to close the wound and a dressing may be applied.

If required, intravenous sedation is optional for this procedure and will be discussed with you on the day. The sedative drug will be given directly into a vein in your arm or hand. You may feel sleepy and cannot always remember what happened during your procedure, however you will be able to talk. Your pulse and blood pressure are recorded during the procedure.

What complications might occur?

All medical procedures have a risk of complication. For a loop recorder implantation these are:

- **Bleeding** - Bleeding at the insertion site can occasionally occur: less than 1 in 100 cases. Any bleeding that does occur usually stops spontaneously on its own, but occasionally requires further treatment. Nurses may have to apply a pressure dressing to help stop the bleeding.
- **Infection** - You will be given intravenous antibiotics before your implantable loop recorder is inserted. These are given directly into your vein, through a cannula. Despite this, some patients can still develop an infection: less than 1 in 100 cases. You will be provided with discharge advice if you have signs or symptoms of a developing infection. Signs include redness, swelling and itchiness.
- **Bruising** - Bruising can occur at the insertion site due to stretching of the skin and bleeding. We monitor your insertion site closely post-procedure.
- **Discomfort** - You may experience discomfort following the procedure. Please discuss suitable pain relief options with your nurse on the day.

What happens after the procedure?

Following the procedure you will be monitored by the nursing staff and regular observations will be taken until you are ready to be discharged. You will be given something to eat and drink.

Prior to going home, a cardiac physiologist will come and speak to you about your device and how to activate it if you experience any symptoms.

Your recovery is likely to be 1–2 hours. You should arrange for someone to collect you and take you home on the day of your procedure.

You will receive an outpatient appointment for approximately 6 weeks time when your device will be analysed. If it does not show any abnormalities, you will be seen every 3 months thereafter. Most patients now receive a home monitoring device where information can be transmitted to the hospital without the need for a regular follow-up.

You will be able to move your arm after the procedure, allowing you to lift things and get dressed. Seatbelts and bra straps may rub on the site; some patients prefer to wear a strapless bra for a few weeks while the wound heals. You can place something soft under a seatbelt to offer comfort.

How will I feel after the procedure?

Most patients will feel well after the procedure. If you choose to have sedation, you may feel sleepy or dizzy afterwards. This will pass quickly once you have had something to eat and drink. The nurses will provide you with the information on what you can and cannot do post-sedation.

There may be some discomfort from your wound site once the local anesthetic has worn off; you will be offered pain relieving medication in recovery. You can speak to your nurse to discuss what medication you can take at home.

You may have a scar at the site of the implant. The doctor performing the procedure will aim to minimize this.

Guidance following discharge after your procedure

- It is advised that you do not return to work for 24 hours after the implant of your loop recorder.
- Do not soak the wound. Keep it dry for at least 10 days (you can shower or wash around it).
- If discharged with a dressing in place, keep this on for 24 hours after discharge. You can remove this yourself at home after this time.
- If you have had sutures to close the wound, these should dissolve themselves. If after 14 days any sutures remain, please contact the **Cardiac Suite** on **01438 284745**.
- Please telephone the Cardiac Suite to report any swelling, redness, itchiness or anything that may concern you about the implant site.
- If the wound site bleeds, apply pressure to the area and, if the bleeding stops, call the Cardiac Suite for further advice. If the bleeding continues, seek medical advice by calling NHS 111 or dial 999.
- Any concerns out of hours, please seek medical advice by calling NHS 111.
- If you experience any symptoms and have to activate the device, please inform the **Pacemaker Clinic** on **01438 781742**.
- If you drive, you will need to inform the DVLA of the loop recorder implant. The DVLA states that you cannot drive if you have been suffering from blackouts. Instructions about regulations for driving will be given to you by the doctor, nurses or cardiac physiologist.
- It is safe to have X-rays, CT scans and mammograms.

What if I have any questions?

If you have any questions or concerns, please speak to a member of the nursing team.

Please use this space to write down any questions you may wish to ask:

Useful telephone numbers

Pacemaker Clinic	☎ 01438 781742
Cardiac Suite Reception	☎ 01438 285912
Cardiac Suite Day Case Unit	☎ 01438 284745 / 284746

(Opening times: Mon to Fri, 7.30am - 8pm)

Reference

<https://www.bhf.org.uk/heart-health/tests/implantable-loop-recorders>

Cardiac Suite (light green zone)

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