



Questions To Ask About Your Device (ICD)

Prior to implant

- ☐ Why is this particular device brand recommended for my circumstances rather than another? (*Manufacturers include Abbott, Boston Scientific, Medtronic, and Biotronik*).
- ☐ How many leads will I have, and why?
- ☐ Will the leads and the ICD generator be the same brand?
- ☐ What are the risks of having an ICD implanted?
- ☐ What kind of anesthesia will be used, and why?
- ☐ What antibiotics will be used to prevent infection? If I'm allergic to certain antibiotics, what alternatives are available?
- ☐ What restrictions will I have after implant, and for how long?
- ☐ Will I receive information about which electronic devices to be aware of, and how far away they need to be to avoid interference with my ICD?
- ☐ Where will the ICD and lead(s) be placed, and how?
- ☐ If I'm concerned about the device being visible, is there a way to place it so it's less noticeable for my body type and size?
- ☐ Where will the incision be, and how large will it be?
- ☐ For patients who wear bras: can the incision be placed so the strap won't rub against it?
- ☐ What will my device settings be, and why?
- ☐ How long will the surgery take, and how much time should I plan to take off work or school?
- ☐ What will be used to close the incision, and will I be able to shower afterward?
- ☐ Will I need to stay overnight in the hospital?
- ☐ Defibrillation threshold (DFT) testing isn't routinely done anymore, though some physicians still perform it. If it's recommended for you, ask why it's necessary in your specific circumstances.
- ☐ Will I receive home monitoring equipment at discharge, or will it be mailed to me?
- ☐ Will I still be able to do the activities I enjoy after implant?
- ☐ How much pain should I expect afterward, and what pain medication will be offered?
- ☐ How should I prepare for the procedure – including whether to take my regular medications the morning of?
- ☐ Will the lead(s) be single-coil or dual-coil, and why?
- ☐ What's the difference between epicardial and transvenous lead placement? Which is recommended for me, and why?
- ☐ What are the benefits and risks of epicardial versus transvenous leads?
- ☐ Will the ICD be stitched in place to help prevent movement or migration?

After implant

- ☐ If I receive a shock from my ICD, what should I do? Should I call the office and wait for a response, or go to the emergency room?
- ☐ Did I have any episodes since my last check? If so, what rhythm was I in, and what will be done to help prevent it from happening again?
- ☐ If I receive a shock that turns out to be inappropriate, what caused it, and what will be done to help prevent it from recurring?
- ☐ If my settings are changed, what changed and why?
- ☐ How much battery life is left on my device?
- ☐ How does remote monitoring work, and what time does my device transmit each night?
- ☐ What kinds of alerts does my device have, and how will they sound or feel?
- ☐ How much battery life does a shock use?
- ☐ Do I need to bring my home monitor when I travel, and is it safe to go through metal detectors with my ICD?
- ☐ If I were to receive a shock while pregnant, could it harm the baby?
- ☐ Now that ICDs can be MRI-safe, does mine need to be switched to a special mode before an MRI?
- ☐ What is the process if I want my ICD deactivated near end of life? Does the device need to be explanted after I pass away?
- ☐ How long do the leads typically last, and how long does the generator (battery) last before it needs replacement?
- ☐ If the incision area gets itchy as it heals, is there anything safe to use on it?
- ☐ Does my ICD track how many premature ventricular contractions (PVCs) I have per day?
- ☐ What is rate-responsive pacing, and is that feature turned on for my device? Why or why not?
- ☐ How long should I wait after surgery before returning to my normal activities?
- ☐ What is my device's shock energy set to (in joules)?

For an ICD battery change or lead extraction/replacement

- ☐ What kind of anesthesia will be used, and why? What antibiotics will be used to prevent infection, and what are the alternatives if I'm allergic?
- ☐ Will the same incision and the same device pocket be used?
- ☐ How long will the surgery take, and how much time should I plan to take off work or school?
- ☐ Will the new device be the same brand as my current one? If not, why the change?
- ☐ Some hospitals return the explanted device to the manufacturer and some don't. Can I request to have my explanted device returned to me, and what's the process?
- ☐ What will be used to close the incision, and will I be able to shower afterward?
- ☐ Will I need to stay overnight in the hospital?
- ☐ Will my settings stay the same? If not, why do they need to change?
- ☐ How much pain should I expect, and what pain medication will be offered?
- ☐ How should I prepare beforehand, including whether to take my regular medications the morning of the procedure?
- ☐ What are the benefits and risks of extracting the old leads versus capping and leaving them in place?
- ☐ How many lead extractions has this physician performed?
- ☐ What determines whether the leads need to be replaced – and will that be known ahead of time, or decided during the procedure itself?