

Information for patients having Cardiac Resynchronisation Therapy (CRT-P) (page 1 of 3)

What is CRT-P?

CRT-P is a specialist pacemaker which is a type of treatment that can help improve symptoms caused by heart failure. In most people, the symptoms of heart failure can be well controlled with tablets alone. However, despite tablets, some people continue to feel very restricted by symptoms of heart failure. CRT-P has been designed to work with your tablets to try and improve these symptoms.

It works by restoring a coordinated or 'synchronised' squeezing pattern to the heart as it contracts. This results in a more effective heart beat which in some people may improve some of the symptoms of heart failure.

Will it work for me?

Identifying people who might benefit from having CRT-P is difficult - the individual's response to CRT-P is variable and often not easy to predict. The clinician who recommends this procedure should explain why they feel CRT might help you.

Pre-assessment clinic

Before the procedure, you will be invited to attend a pre-assessment clinic. This will usually be one week before the planned procedure. This appointment is very important and will take approximately 1 hour. You will have swabs taken for MRSA and some blood tests, you may also need a chest X-Ray if you have not had one recently. You will be told when to stop your warfarin [or other anticoagulant drugs] at this appointment. Please call the number on this paperwork to rearrange your appointment if you are unable to make the appointment.

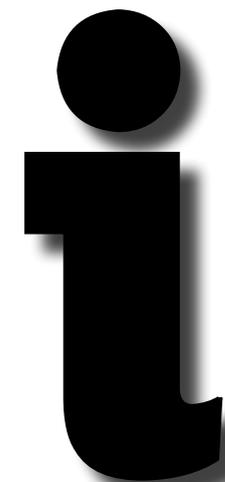
The procedure itself takes place on level 4 in The Cardiac Suite. This is a unit designed specifically for performing tests and doing procedures on the heart.

As X-rays are used, it is important you tell us immediately if there is any chance you could be pregnant.

You should not eat for 4 hours but you can drink water up till 2 hours before. You can take your tablets as usual with some water but do not take your diuretic tablets [i.e. furosemide]. If you have diabetes, you should speak to the nurse at the pre-assessment about what you should

Cardiac Investigation Unit

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You are entitled to a copy of any letter we write about you. Please ask if you want one when you come to the hospital.

Please complete The Friends & Family Test to tell us about your experience at: www.salisbury.nhs.uk/FriendsFamily or download our App from the Apple App store or Google Play Store.

The evidence used in the preparation of this leaflet is available on request. Please email: patient.information@salisbury.nhs.uk if you would like a reference list.

do. You should wear loose comfortable clothes as you will be asked to undress from the waist up. You will be offered a hospital gown.

A cannula will be inserted into your arm and electrodes will be attached to your chest and limbs to monitor your heart rhythm [ECG]. Your blood pressure will also be monitored regularly throughout the procedure.

You will be given sedation through the cannula in your arm to prevent any discomfort and to help you relax.

During the CRT procedure

Throughout the test, you will be looked after by an experienced team of people including the Cardiologist who will be implanting the device. A small cut [approx. 8cms] is made in the skin about 5cms below the left shoulder, above the breast. This will leave a scar. The pacemaker wires are inserted through a vein, one at a time. These wires are carefully manipulated into three separate areas of the heart:- one into the right atrium, one into the right ventricle, and one into the left ventricle. The position of the wires will be checked using X-ray and the performance of the device will be checked using a special monitoring device.

Once the cardiologist is happy that all is working well, the wires will be attached to a small battery which is then secured in place under the skin. The cut will be closed using dissolvable stitches and a dressing will be applied.

After the CRT procedure

You will be transferred to Tisbury Ward [the cardiac ward] where you will be monitored overnight. You should try to keep your arm as still as possible initially because excessive movement can cause the wires to become dislodged. To minimise the risk of infection you will also be given antibiotics to take before and after the procedure.

The next day you will have a chest X-ray to check the position of the pacemaker leads and a pacemaker check. The wound should be kept clean and dry until it has fully healed, although it is fine to have a bath or shower after the first three or four days. You can help by avoiding lifting your arm for the first two weeks. You will be given a pacemaker identification card [WHICH YOU SHOULD CARRY WITH YOU AT ALL TIMES] and an appointment to come back for a further check approximately four weeks later. At this appointment you will have a pacemaker check, be seen by a member of the heart failure team who will optimise your medication.

Follow up care

You will need a check of your device every 6 months. This will either take place in the cardiac investigation department or by 'remote monitoring'. This works by sending relevant information down your telephone line. You will be given specific information regarding all of these checks during your first follow-up appointment.

Getting back to normal

After a short period of convalescence, you should be able to return to your normal activities. You must not drive for 7 days following the procedure, but it is important that you inform the DVLA and your insurance company that you have had CRT. Stricter rules may apply if you drive for a living. The DVLA should be able to help.

There is no reason why you can't return to work but you may need to inform your occupational health department or Health and Safety advisor.

It may be possible to reduce some of the tablets you are taking but this should be done in consultation with your clinician at your outpatient appointment.

Is there any equipment that may affect my device?

Equipment that uses magnets and electricity usually will not affect your pacemaker i.e. computers, microwaves, dishwashers, etc. Strong electromagnetic fields can cause interference which will affect the functioning of your pacemaker i.e. MRI scan. If you ever feel dizzy or experience palpitations whilst using an electrical appliance, you should move away from the device and let us know.

Please feel free to contact a member of the heart failure team if you have any concerns or questions about your condition or the procedure.

Contact details

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