

## Cardiology services

# Having an implantable loop recorder (ILR) implant

## Information for patients, relatives and carers

This leaflet aims to tell you about having an implantable loop recorder implant and answer some of the questions that you or those who care for you may have. It is not meant to replace the discussion between you and your medical team.

### Contacts

*From Monday to Friday, between 09.00 and 17.00, unless stated otherwise.*

Booking Team: **020 3313 1661** or email: [ICHC-tr.cathlabs@nhs.net](mailto:ICHC-tr.cathlabs@nhs.net)

Cardiac Day Ward: **020 3313 1663** or **020 3313 4034**  
(Monday to Friday: 08.00–18.00)

Cardiac Rhythm Management team: **020 3313 3943** (Hammersmith); **020 3312 1956** (St Mary's)

LINQ team: **020 331 37351**

Medtronic BeConnect: **00800 266 632 82**  
(Monday to Friday 08.00-16.00)

Transport booking team: **033 0678 1245**  
(Monday to Friday: 08.00–20.00, Saturday and Sunday: 10.00–13.00)

For out of hours, please contact NHS **111** for advice and health information.

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

An implantable loop recorder (ILR) is a small device that is implanted under the skin to continuously monitor any abnormal heart rhythms. An ILR can automatically record any fast or slow heart rate and/or to store information such as your symptoms by simply pressing a button on a special activator. You will be taught how to use the activator after your ILR implant.

Most ILR batteries last approximately four years. After which time, you will be advised to have the ILR removed.

However, your ILR may be removed sooner and replaced with a pacemaker or an implantable cardiac defibrillator. This will depend on whether any significant rhythm problems have been

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detected by the ILR and if any cardiac events are related to your symptoms such as fainting spells (syncope) or fast heart rate (palpitation).



An ILR (from Medtronic) compared with a 50p coin

ILR implantation procedure usually lasts between 10 and 30 minutes. You should be able to go home on the same day.

More information can be found on the website [www.explainmyprocedure.com/imperial-ilr](http://www.explainmyprocedure.com/imperial-ilr)



or scan

Password: imp1723

Your friends/relatives can phone up the cardiac day ward to find out how you are doing and what time you will be discharged.

## Why has an ILR been recommended for me?

You may have experienced regular, unexplained episodes of palpitations or syncope (loss of consciousness) that neither an electrocardiogram nor Holter monitoring can identify in that instance. An ILR will be particularly helpful to determine if these symptoms are related to your heart. In addition, an ILR is also useful in monitoring someone who has:

- atrial fibrillation (irregular and fast heart beats arising in the top chambers of the heart) and/or
- ventricular tachycardia (regular and fast heart beats arising in the bottom chamber of the heart).
- previous ischaemic stroke

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## Are there any alternatives to an ILR implantation?

An ILR implantation will only be requested by your doctor if they feel that this is the best way to treat your heart condition and to monitor and find out more information that can contribute to your symptoms for the (approximately) four-year period.

Other alternatives will be not to have the ILR implant or getting a 7-day event monitor or 24-hour/48-hour Holter monitor that record your cardiac electrograms.

## What are the risks and complications involved in having an ILR implantation?

The risks involved in having the procedure will vary from patient to patient depending on your medical history. The LINQ team will discuss the risks in more detail with you on the day of your procedure and you will be asked to sign a consent form.

Complications may include:

- bleeding or bruising
- risk of infection. This generally occurs within the first few weeks after implantation. Symptoms include pain, swelling and redness or oozing at the wound site
- skin erosion causing unhealed wound that can result in the ILR device being removed

Overall: Complication is <1% (less than one in hundred).

## What I need to know before having an ILR implantation?

### **Tell us if you are pregnant**

You must tell your cardiologist if you are pregnant or think you may be pregnant. They can give you the right advice about your treatment.

### **Tell us if you have been unwell**

If you have had vomiting or diarrhoea, a cough, cold or skin infection with or without a fever during the 3 days before your procedure, please contact the booking team.

### **Plan your journey**

Many people benefit from planning their journey to the hospital. Knowing your route can help you get there in plenty of time for your procedure.

Car parking: there are a small number of general and disabled car parking spaces at Hammersmith Hospital. For help with journey planning visit: [imperial.nhs.uk/our-locations](http://imperial.nhs.uk/our-locations) and [tfl.gov.uk](http://tfl.gov.uk).

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## If you cannot keep your appointment

Please contact the booking team immediately, if you cannot attend your appointment.

This allows us to

- agree a new appointment date and time with you and
- offer another patient your original appointment

We will always aim to reschedule your procedure appointment to the next available date.

If you are running late on the day of admission, please contact the cardiac day ward to notify them your estimated arrival time.

## What happens if I need transport or an overnight stay?

In line with Department of Health guidelines, we have a non-emergency transport service for patients whose clinical condition or mobility makes it very difficult for them to attend hospital without transport assistance.

Please visit our website for more details <https://www.imperial.nhs.uk> > patients and visitors > help and support > patient transport.

Short-stay studio flats are available for you and your visitors should you required. We have purpose-built accommodation next to Hammersmith Hospital on Du Cane Road.

For further enquiries, please contact 020 3313 4873 or email [imperial.accommodation@nhs.net](mailto:imperial.accommodation@nhs.net) for more information. Note that your relative or friend may need to stay with you overnight after your procedure.

## How should I prepare for an ILR implantation?

Before coming to the hospital to attend your procedure, it is important for you to

- have a shower or bath
- remove any nail polish
- avoid applying heavy makeup
- refrain from apply moisturising skin lotion on your chest or on the implantation site, as monitoring equipment will be placed on your chest

You may prefer to shave or remove any hairs from the chest area (if possible) on your own to minimise the risk of infection. If not, this can be done for you on the day of the procedure.

Please bring only essential items and avoid wearing jewellery or other valuables. We advise that you wear loose clothing and comfortable footwear when attending your procedure. As

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you may be in the hospital for a couple of hours, we also suggest bringing something to read or listen to with a headset or earphones while you wait.

Only **plain (non-flavoured) water** is allowed up to 2 hours before your procedure.

For more details on how to prepare for your planned procedure, please visit our website <https://www.imperial.nhs.uk> >patients and visitors > patients > planned procedures and surgery.

## Medication

Please bring all your medications that you are currently taking with you when attending your procedure.

If you have any drug allergies, please ensure that you inform the team.

If you have asthma, please bring your inhaler medication with you.

If you are taking warfarin:

- please continue taking your warfarin and aim for an INR of less than 2.5 on the day of your procedure. Your anticoagulation clinic will be able to assist you in this
- it is very important that you bring your yellow INR record book with you

If you are taking Rivaroxaban (Xarelto), Apixaban (Eliquis), Edoxaban (Lixiana) or Dabigatran (Pradaxa):

- please stop taking the medication 1 day before your procedure unless otherwise advised by your cardiologist. (For example, if your procedure is scheduled for Monday morning, the last dose of anticoagulation medication should be taken on the Sunday morning, leaving at least 24-hour duration free of the anticoagulant before the procedure. If you usually take your anticoagulation medication in the evening, then the last dose should be taken on the Saturday evening before the procedure.)

If you are taking Aspirin, Clopidogrel, Prasugrel or Ticagrelor:

- please stop taking the medication on the day of your procedure. The LINQ team will be able to advise you when to restart the medication

If you are taking low molecular weight heparins such as Enoxaparin sodium (Lovenox, Clexane), Dalteparin and Tinzaparin:

- please contact LINQ team at 020 331 37351 (Monday to Friday: 09.00-17.00)

For any medications not stated above, please continue as per recommended by your doctor or pharmacist.

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## What happens on the day of my appointment?

Please arrive at the hospital at the time stated in your admission letter. Note that this will not be the actual time of your procedure.

You will need to go to the cardiac day ward that is located beside the heart attack centre on the first floor of Block A, above the outpatient department. Please check in at the reception desk. Visit our website for our internal site map <https://www.imperial.nhs.uk> >our locations > hammersmith > hospital map.

A bed or chair space will be allocated to you where blood samples and clinical history will be taken. The ILR implanter will explain the risks and benefits of the procedure to you, and you will be asked to sign a consent form.

You will then change into a hospital gown and a member of staff will escort you to the procedure room.

We will ask you to lie down on the procedure table and connect you to the monitoring equipment. We will clean your chest area with antiseptic fluid and cover it with a sterile sheet.

## The procedure

The ILR implanter will inject local anaesthetic to numb the area. This stinging sensation will only last for a short period of time. When the implantation site is numb, the ILR implanter will make a small cut. The device is usually implanted close to the left collarbone; however, this can vary and will be discussed with you before the procedure.

The ILR will then be secured in position and the wound is closed using a special type of medical skin adhesive (glue).

Once the procedure is over, you will be taken back to the recovery ward for post procedure observation.

## What happens after the procedure?

The implant site may be sore for a couple of days. You may also notice some bruising, especially if you are taking blood thinning tablets. This is normal.

You will not routinely require any new medications following your procedure. Any medications prescribed for you because of the procedure will be supplied by the hospital.

## Wound care

### Dressings

It is important that you keep the wound clean and dry until it has healed. If a dressing has been applied, you can remove this dressing 4 to 5 days after your procedure.

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Although it is not necessary, you may find it preferable to keep your wound covered with a dry dressing for a longer period. Please ensure that the sticky edges of the dressing do not contact the wound.

In most cases, you will find that a medical skin adhesive has been applied on the skin edges of wound. This medical skin adhesive has a water-resistant protective coating and will flake off by itself within 5 to 10 days.

## Washing

You can shower after your procedure, however, try and avoid getting the wound wet. Please remember to:

- always pat down to dry the wound area rather than rubbing
- do not immerse in any bath for at least 1 to 2 week or only until your wound has fully healed
- do not scrub, scratch or touch or apply any heat packs, cream, or oil over the wound site to minimise the risk of wound infection

If the wound becomes sore or swollen or there is excess discharge or oozing, please contact the LINQ team: **020 331 37351** or Cardiac Rhythm Management team: **020 3313 3943** or **020 3312 1956** (Monday to Friday: 09.00–17.00).

## At home

It is important to carry on your daily activities. If your symptoms occur, you can record an event using a handheld activator kit or your smart mobile phone device (Medtronic BeConnect team will be able to assist you).

The ILR is also programmed to automatically detect and record any abnormally fast or slow heart rhythms regardless of the presence of any symptoms.

## Are there activities I need to avoid?

Most people can return to their normal activities and jobs. There is a very small risk of damage to your ILR from an exceptionally violent impact, so heavy contact sports should be avoided.

## Do I need to avoid electrical appliances and mobile phones?

There is no restriction with using electrical appliances or a mobile phone when you have an ILR. Most ILRs are compatible with MRI scanners.

If you require MRI scan, please check with the cardiac rhythm management team before your scan. Normal x-rays and CT scans are safe.

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If you have concerns that the treatment you require may affect your device, please discuss them with the cardiac rhythm management team or your doctor.

## ID card

Your ILR ID card will be given to you before your hospital discharge. **It is important that your ID card is always carried with you.** This will allow medical professionals to identify your type of device should they need to.

## Follow-up checks

On-going care and management of your ILR will be coordinated by the cardiac rhythm management team. An initial appointment will be sent to you for a check around 4 to 8 weeks after the procedure.

You will be follow-up at either Hammersmith Hospital or St Mary's Hospital depending on where you normally reside.

Your ILR will be checked at regular intervals via remote transmission so you may not always be required to attend the hospital. It is very important that you contact the Medtronic BeConnect team after your ILR implantation.

All these regular checks do not replace seeing your cardiologist in the outpatient clinic.

## Driving – when to notify the Driving and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA)

You do not need to inform DVLA about your ILR implant. You may need to inform them about your medical condition so they can assess if you are fit to drive. Further information can be found on the DVLA website <https://www.gov.uk/driving-medical-conditions>



Or scan

## Seatbelts

Patients with an ILR are not exempt from wearing a seatbelt. It should not cause much discomfort as the device is very small.



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## Is it safe to travel?

If there have been no complications, you will be able to travel a couple of days after your procedure, however, it will be preferred that you attend your first appointment with us before travelling.

Remember to present your ILR ID card to airport security staff so they can perform appropriate action or instructions about walking through the security archway or using the handheld wand for your security clearance.

Always ensure that you have adequate travel insurance.

## Useful links:

British Heart Foundation – [www.bhf.org.uk/](http://www.bhf.org.uk/)

Stop Fainting – [stopfainting.com/](http://stopfainting.com/)

Syncope Trust and Reflex Anoxic Seizures – [www.heartrhythmalliance.org/stars/uk](http://www.heartrhythmalliance.org/stars/uk)

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## How do I make a comment about my visit?

We aim to provide the best possible care and would like to hear about your experience of our services. By telling us about your experiences and raising any concerns you may have, it helps us to make improvements.

Please visit our website for more information <https://www.imperial.nhs.uk> > patients and visitors > help and support > your feedback.

If you have any general queries or would like to raise a concern, please either speak to a member of staff or contact the patient advice and liaison service (PALS) 020 3312 7777 (10.00 – 16.00, Monday to Friday). You can also email PALS at [imperial.pals@nhs.net](mailto:imperial.pals@nhs.net) The PALS team will listen to your concerns, suggestions or queries and is often able to help solve problems on your behalf.

If, despite our best efforts, we are not able to resolve your concerns informally with the staff caring for you or via PALS, you have the choice to make a formal complaint. To make a complaint please email our complaints office at: [ICHC-tr.Complaints@nhs.net](mailto:ICHC-tr.Complaints@nhs.net) or send a letter addressed to:

Complaints department

Fourth floor

Salton House

St Mary's Hospital

Praed Street

London W2 1NY

## Alternative formats

This leaflet can be provided on request in large print or easy read, as a sound recording, in Braille or in alternative languages.

Please email the communications team: [imperial.communications@nhs.net](mailto:imperial.communications@nhs.net)

## Wi-Fi

Wi-Fi is available at our Trust. For more information visit our website: <https://www.imperial.nhs.uk>