

Cardiology services

Having an implantable loop recorder (ILR) implant

Information for patients, relatives and carers

Contact details

Booking Team: **020 3313 1661** or email: ICHC-tr.cathlabs@nhs.net

Cardiac Day Ward: **020 3313 1663** or **020 3313 4034**

**Due to Covid 19, visiting restrictions remain in place to keep everyone safe. Please visit our website for more details <https://www.imperial.nhs.uk> > patients and visitors > visiting.

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

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

Above contacts are available Monday to Friday 09.00 – 17.00.

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 3 to 4 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 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 fifty pence coin

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

As part of NHS safety measures in response to Covid 19, there are restrictions in place when visiting our hospital. Please visit our website for more details <https://www.imperial.nhs.uk> > patients and visitors > visiting.

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).

Are there any alternative 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 three year period.

Other alternatives will be not to have the ILR implant or getting a 7 day event monitor or 24hour/ 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 implanter 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.

What I need to know before having an ILR implantation?

It is important that you **arrange for a relative or friend to take you home** after your procedure by car/taxi. You may not drive or use public transport (on your own). **Your relative or friend may need to stay with you overnight or you may choose to stay with them for the night.**

If you are pregnant or think you may be pregnant, you must contact your cardiologist for appropriate advice about your treatment.

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 hospital journey beforehand. Wear a face mask (if possible) while travelling using public transport, hospital transport, a family car or a taxi. Please note that Hammersmith Hospital has a small number of general and disabled car parking spaces. Please visit our website for more details <https://www.imperial.nhs.uk> > our hospitals > hammersmith > parking.

What if I cannot keep my appointment?

If you cannot attend your appointment, please contact the booking team immediately. This allows us to agree a new appointment date and time with you and offer your original appointment to another patient. We will always aim to re-schedule 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 provide 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. 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 for more information. Note that your relative or friend will need to stay with you overnight after your procedure.

How should I prepare for an ILR implantation?

In response to Covid 19, we are taking every precaution to protect our patients and staff. We ask all patients and their carers to familiarise themselves with our new procedures for coming into hospital. Once you arrived at the hospital, please follow physical distancing rules (keep a two-metre distance from others), wear a face mask and practise good hand hygiene. Please visit our website for latest information on coronavirus infection prevention and control measures in place across our hospitals <https://www.imperial.nhs.uk> > patients and visitors > patients > coronavirus latest information.

Before coming to the hospital to attend your procedure, it is important to shower or bath. Please ensure any nail polish is removed and avoid applying heavy makeup. As monitoring equipment will be placed on your chest, it is advised not to apply moisturising skin lotion on your chest or on the implantation site. To minimise the risk of infection, you may prefer to shave or remove any hairs from the chest area (if possible) on your own. If not, this can be done for you on the day of the procedure.

Please only bring essential items and avoid wearing jewellery or other valuables. Bring a dressing gown, loose clothing, and comfortable footwear such as a pair of slippers for ease. As you may be in the hospital for a couple of hours, we suggest bringing something to read or listen to with a headset or earphones while you wait.

It is important that you do not eat and drink before your procedure to reduce the risk of food and drinks going into your lungs:

- **no food or milky/flavoured drinks for 6 hours** before your procedure.
- **only Plain (non-flavoured) Water** is allowed **until 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 around 2.5 for a week before 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 24h duration free of the anticoagulant prior to the procedure. If you usually take your anticoagulation medication in the evening, then the last dose should be taken on the Saturday evening prior to the procedure.)*

If you are taking Clopidogrel, Prasugrel or Ticagrelor

- please continue taking the medication.

If you are taking Aspirin

- please do not take on the morning of your procedure

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

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 outpatients department. Please check in at the reception desk. Visit our website for our internal site map <https://www.imperial.nhs.uk> >our hospitals > hammersmith > hospital map.

A bed or chair space will be allocated to you where blood samples and clinical history will be taken. The 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 theatre 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 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 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 closed using sutures and/or a special type of medical skin adhesive.

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 weeks. 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 as a result of the procedure will be supplied by the hospital.

Wound care

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 2 days after your procedure. 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.

If you had sutures to close the wound, the nursing staffs will be able to tell you the type of sutures used. Some sutures dissolve by themselves whilst others will need to be removed by your GP practice nurse after 7 to 10 days.

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 after 5 to 10 days.

You can shower after your procedure, however, try and avoid getting the wound wet. 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/ touch or apply any heat packs, cream or oil over the wound site to minimise the risk of wound infection.

You may be given antibiotics to take for the first few days after you get home, although this is not always required. If antibiotics are prescribed for you, they will be supplied by the hospital.

If the wound becomes sore or swollen or there is excess discharge or oozing, please contact the cardiac day ward or the cardiac rhythm management team immediately.

At home

It is important to carry on your daily activities. If your symptoms occur, you can record an event by using your handheld activator kit.

The ILR is 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.

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 or when you attend your first ILR follow-up appointment.

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 co-ordinated 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 Marys Hospital depending on where you normally reside.

Your ILR will be checked at regular intervals. It is very important that you do not miss your follow-up appointments. Some ILRs can also be checked via remote transmission so you may not always be required to attend the hospital.

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/guidance/cardiovascular-disorders-assessing-fitness-to-drive>



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.

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, we would advise 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/ 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 - <https://www.bhf.org.uk/>

Stop Fainting - <https://stopfainting.com>

Syncope Trust And Reflex anoxic Seizures - <http://www.heartrhythmalliance.org/stars/uk>

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 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 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

Wi-Fi

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