

Cardiology services

Having an implantable loop recorder (ILR) removal

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) removal?

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.

Most ILR batteries last approximately 3 years. After which time, you will be advised to have the ILR removed as it can no longer record any information.

In other cases, the 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

The ILR removal procedure usually lasts between 10 to 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.

Are there any alternative to an ILR removal?

An ILR removal will only be requested by your doctor if they feel that this is the best way to treat your heart condition by replacing with a pacemaker or an implantable cardiac defibrillator or if the ILR can no longer record any information. Other alternative is opting not to have the removal procedure performed.

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

The risks involved in having the procedure will vary from patient to patient depending on your medical history. The cardiologist 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 removal. Symptoms include pain, swelling and redness or oozing at the wound site.

What I need to know before my procedure?

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 my procedure?

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 cardiologist 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 cardiologist will inject local anaesthetic to numb the area. This stinging sensation will only last for a short period of time. When the site is numb, the cardiologist will make a small cut and take out the ILR device. 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 happen after the procedure?

The removal 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

You can return to work or normal physical activities soon after the ILR removal procedure (without any replacement with a cardiac device such as a pacemaker or an implantable cardioverter defibrillator).

Follow-up checks

You do not need to attend any ILR follow-up after your ILR has been removed.

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

You do not need to inform DVLA after your ILR has been removed. You may need to inform them about your medical condition so they can assess if you are fit for driving. Further information is on their website <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/cardiovascular-disorders-assessing-fitness-to-drive>



Or scan

Is it safe to travel?

If there have been no complications or any other cardiac device fitted in replacement of your ILR removal, you will be able to travel after your procedure, however, please speak to your doctor before making travel arrangements and always ensure that you have adequate travel insurance.

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.

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