

Cardiology services

Having an implantable loop recorder (ILR) removed

Information for patients, relatives and carers

Introduction

This leaflet aims to tell you about having an implantable loop recorder removed 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

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) 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 4 years. After which time, you will be advised to have the ILR removed as it can no longer record any information.

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 50p coin

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

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 alternatives 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 removing an ILR?

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 removal. Symptoms include pain, swelling and redness or oozing at the wound site

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 and tfl.gov.uk.

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 require. 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 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 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.

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 extractor 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 ILR extractor will make a small cut and take out the ILR device. The wound is closed using sutures or 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 happen after the procedure?

The wound 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 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.

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 (glue) 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

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 about your ILR removal. 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

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 service and staff will be happy to answer any of the questions you may have. If you have any **suggestions** or **comments** about your visit, please either speak to a member of staff or contact the patient advice and liaison service (**PALS**) on **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.

Alternatively, you may wish to complain by contacting our complaints department:

Complaints department, fourth floor, Salton House, St Mary's Hospital, Praed Street
London W2 1NY

Email: ICHC-tr.Complaints@nhs.net

Telephone: **020 3312 1337 / 1349**

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: www.imperial.nhs.uk

Cardiology services
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