

## Device Clinic Follow-Up

Device clinic follow-up is necessary to ensure that your rhythm management device is functioning optimally.

### How Devices Work

Pacemakers, implantable defibrillators, and implantable loop recorders all collect information about the heart rhythm and respond to it in various ways.

- Pacemakers will pace the heart if they fail to detect an adequate heart rate.
- All modern implantable defibrillators can act as pacemakers when necessary, but also, will shock the heart if they see a dangerous rhythm.
- Loop recorders will record abnormal heart rhythms.

### What Your Clinic Visits Are Like

At your clinic visit the device nurse will check to make sure that your device is set to sense all the appropriate heart signals, but not detect signals that come from outside the heart, such as those generated from muscle activity. If the device is not sensing cardiac signals appropriately it will be adjusted.

In order to ensure that your pacemaker or ICD can pace the heart efficiently, the device nurse will check to ensure that the device can pace your heart with an adequate safety margin, but without delivering excessive energy that would deplete the battery. All these devices are battery operated.

All rhythm management devices record the heart rhythm and keep track of your heart rate. If you have any episodes of abnormal heart rhythm this will be recorded. Some devices record other information such as your activity level or whether or not you are retaining fluid. All this information will be collected and passed on to your physician at the clinic visit.

Pacemakers and ICDs are battery operated. In order to ensure that they will pace the heart with an adequate safety margin but not use excessive energy it is necessary to check the minimum amount of energy necessary to pace the heart in each chamber, and this is done at each clinic visit.

The other critical piece of information obtained at clinic visits is the status of the battery. If clinic visits and telephone or remote telemetry checks are done on schedule, it is unlikely that the battery will deplete unexpectedly. With routine clinic visits we are able to detect battery depletion before it affects device function.

### How Often Are Clinic Visits Scheduled?

Clinic visits are typically scheduled at seven to ten days post implant, at three months post implant, and then at every six or twelve months depending on the type of device, patient

needs, and type of remote follow-up. Remote or telephone follow-up is usually scheduled every three months. When devices near the end of life monthly follow up by phone or remote telemetry is initiated.

Keeping your clinic appointments and remote or telephone checks on schedule is critical to insure appropriate device function.