

After your procedure

- As soon as you feel able to, you will be allowed to eat and drink prior to being discharged home.
- You are not allowed to drive or operate machinery for the rest of the day so **you will need to make arrangements to be taken home.**
- **You must** have someone to stay with you overnight after a general anaesthetic. These arrangements should be confirmed before your admission date.
- An outpatient appointment will be sent to you at approximately four to six weeks to review your progress after the Cardioversion.
- Continue taking your Warfarin/blood thinning medication as normal until you are reviewed at your follow-up appointment.
- If the cardioversion is unsuccessful at restoring a normal heart rhythm, a repeat procedure with different medication or alternative treatments will be discussed at your follow-up appointment.

Who do I contact to change my appointment?

Administrative Assistant Cardiology on 01270 278078.

Who do I contact for further information?

Cardiology Advanced Nurse Practitioner - telephone Leighton Hospital Switchboard on 01270 255141 and ask for extension 3559 or bleep 3262

Cardiology Administrative Assistant on 01270 278078.

You may also contact your GP in the event of any problems. In an emergency you should attend the nearest Emergency Department (A&E).

This information is available in audio, Braille, large print and other languages. To request a copy, please telephone 01270 278078.



Electrical Cardioversion

Important information for patients



This leaflet has been written to provide information about a procedure to help correct abnormal heart rhythms (Cardioversion). We hope it answers some of the questions you may have about the procedure. This leaflet is to supplement the verbal information given to you by the Doctor or Nurse.

What is a Cardioversion?

Electrical Cardioversion is a procedure where a controlled electrical current is delivered through the chest wall to restore normal heart rhythm.

Why do I need a Cardioversion?

You need a Cardioversion because your heart is beating irregularly. There are many reasons why this may have occurred. The important thing is to try and restore your heart to a normal rhythm and help to reduce any symptoms you may be experiencing.

How is Cardioversion done?

A Cardioversion is performed either by a qualified Nurse or a Doctor. Special electrodes pads are applied to the skin on your chest. A controlled electrical current is delivered through the chest wall with the purpose of interrupting the abnormal heart rhythm and restoring a normal rhythm. You will be given a general anaesthetic for this procedure.

How long does the procedure take?

The electrical treatment itself only takes a few minutes, but if the first attempt is unsuccessful a further three repeat attempts are made. Total time is variable, but approximately you will under anaesthetic for up to 10 minutes. Following the procedure you will be observed on the ward for up to three hours prior to your discharge.

Will it work?

Most of the time sinus rhythm will be restored. However, this may only be for a short period of time. If your symptoms recur you may need to have the procedure repeated after taking additional medication. Alternatively you may be referred for further treatment.

What are the benefits of the procedure?

Improvement in your symptoms such as shortness of breath, palpitations and tiredness.

What are the risks involved?

When the heart beats irregularly it does not pump blood as effectively. Small clots can sometimes form in the top part of the heart which can increase the risk of heart attack or stroke during the procedure. To reduce this risk before your Cardioversion you will need to start taking medication to thin your blood called an anticoagulant. This is usually Apixaban, Rivaroxaban, Edoxaban, Dabigatran, Warfarin or a Warfarin substitute. We will decide what medication you should take when you talk to your specialist. Thinning the blood will enable any tiny clots to be dissolved naturally, which will reduce the risk of heart attack and stroke during and following the Cardioversion.

Following the Cardioversion you may feel slight skin irritation/burn after the chest electrode pads have been removed. This can easily be treated with moisturising cream and simple pain killers.

Whenever general anaesthesia is used, there is a small risk of complications, such as chest infections or vomiting. For this reason, you must have an empty stomach prior to the procedure.

What do I need to do before I come into hospital?

- If you take Digoxin stop taking this drug two days before your Cardioversion is planned.
- Continue taking Warfarin/blood thinning medication as instructed.
- If you take other medications continue these at your normal dose.
- Please bring all your medications and your Warfarin book into hospital with you on the day of the Cardioversion. If you are diabetic and taking insulin, please bring your insulin with you.
- Do not eat any food after midnight on the day of the procedure; you may take a small sip of water to take your morning tablets. It is because of the anaesthetic that it is important to follow the instructions about not eating and drinking.

What will happen when I come to hospital?

- An ECG will be performed to confirm your heart rhythm is still irregular.
- A blood sample may be taken to check that your INR (Warfarin level) is within an acceptable range for the Cardioversion to be safely carried out (this will be done at your pre assessment appointment the day before your cardioversion).
- You should have already had all your questions answered about the Cardioversion. If you are happy with the explanation given you will be asked to sign a consent form for the procedure. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to ask.
- You will then be taken to the Cardioversion room where the anaesthetist will place a small needle in your arm so that the anaesthetic can be given.