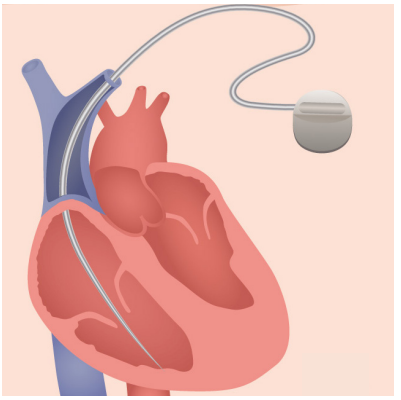


Pacemakers and defibrillators



Your heart is having trouble beating normally. After an assessment, your cardiologist has determined that you need a pacemaker or defibrillator.

What is a pacemaker or defibrillator?

In both cases, it's a small device consisting of a box with a battery installed under the skin of the chest and wires (electrodes) connected to the heart. It monitors your heart and sends electrical signals to stimulate the heart muscle as needed.

- > The **pacemaker** effectively treats disorders related to a slow heartbeat. It sends small electrical signals to restore your heart to a normal rhythm.
- > A **defibrillator** is installed if you're at risk of heart rhythm problems that could cause death. It delivers an electric shock when needed. It can also act as a pacemaker

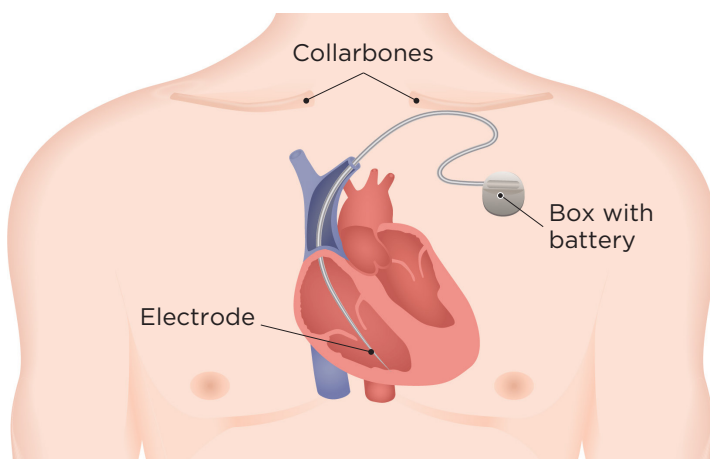


If the defibrillator delivers an electric shock, you may feel as if you've been punched in the chest. This sensation is brief, and the shock helps the heart return to a normal rhythm.

After several years, an operation will be needed to change the battery in the box.

How should I prepare?

- > Some medications must be stopped a few days before your procedure. Your doctor will tell you which ones.
- > Stop eating and drinking 6 hours before the operation.
- > **Don't take any medication on the morning of the operation.**
- > Bring to the hospital all the medications you usually take, with an up-to-date list of them.
- > Bring a friend or family member to the hospital, as you won't be able to drive your car home.



What happens during the operation?

It takes 1 to 2 hours, depending on the case.

- 1 At the site of the operation, the care team injects a product to numb your skin. Another medication is delivered through the veins to relax you (sedation).
- 2 The skin of the chest is disinfected. A small incision is then made under the collarbone.
- 3 A space is created under the skin to insert the box at the end of the operation.
- 4 The electrodes are passed into the heart through a vein. To position them properly, the team is guided by X-rays.
- 5 Once they're installed in the heart, the electrodes are connected to the box, which is then placed in the space created under the skin.
- 6 The incision is closed with dissolving stitches. These will disappear on their own after a few days.
- 7 Finally, the incision is covered with a bandage.
- 8 You'll remain under supervision in the hospital for a few hours.

Are there any complications?

There is a small chance of having:

In the short term:

- > bleeding at the site of the operation
- > blockage of the vein through which the electrodes pass
- > a hole in the lung or heart (pulmonary or cardiac perforation)

In the medium or long term:

- > electrodes that shift or break
- > an infection; in that case, antibiotics or removal of the device will be necessary

This list is not complete, and some complications require a new operation.

The content of this document in no way replaces the recommendations and diagnoses made, or the treatment suggested by your health professional.



APPOINTMENT

Come to the CHUM Interventional Electrophysiology service with your health insurance (RAMQ) card.

Date:

Time:

Location : CHUM
D Pavilion, 8th floor, room D0141
1000 Saint-Denis St., Montréal

Medication to be stopped before the procedure:

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Who can I call if I have questions about my appointment?

If you're unable to keep this appointment, or if you have a question, please call **514-890-8000, ext. 15472**, Monday to Friday, from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.



USEFUL RESOURCES

Heart & Stroke website:

> **heartandstroke.ca**

Click on Heart disease → Treatments → under the header Surgeries, procedures → Implantable pacemaker

University of Ottawa Heart Institute:

> **ottawaheart.ca**

Hover over the tab Patients and Visitors, click on Tests and Procedures → Pacemaker

Other health sheets published by the CHUM are available. Ask for those that might fit your situation.



You can also find them on our website
chumontreal.qc.ca/fiches-sante