

## **CARDIOVERSION**

### **What is Cardioversion ?**

Cardioversion is a way to restore your heart's normal rhythm. When your heartbeat is irregular, medication is often used first to try to restore your heart to normal rhythm (chemical cardioversion). If that doesn't work, cardioversion may be the next step. During this procedure a small electrical current is delivered. The electric shock helps to restore your heartbeat to normal. You will be hospitalized for the procedure.

### **Why do I require Cardioversion?**

When the heart beats abnormally blood does not pump effectively around the body. You may therefore experience dizziness, shortness of breath, tiredness and palpitations (racing heart). With cardioversion your heart rhythm will be restored to normal and you will feel improved.

### **Preparation for the procedure**

Your doctor will explain to you the need for cardioversion as well as the risks involved. You will be given instructions on when to stop eating and drinking. Do not apply lotions or powders to your skin and remove all jewellery. You will be asked to sign a consent form for the procedure. 6 hours before your scheduled time of hospital admission you will be instructed to stop eating and drinking. If you are instructed to continue with any of your usual medications, take them with small sips of water only. For early morning procedures it is sometimes necessary to be admitted to hospital the night before. If this is the case you will be informed by HeartRx Staff exactly what is required.

You may be asked to take anticoagulants (blood thinners) for a few weeks prior to the procedure. This medication helps to prevent blood clots from forming.

## **How the test is performed**

Electrodes (small pads) are placed on your chest to record your heartbeat.

You will be attached to a heart monitor throughout the procedure.

You will be seen by an anaesthetist who will insert an intravenous line into your arm to provide access for sedation/drugs to be administered. You will be given a light anaesthetic which will make you feel sleepy. You will not feel any discomfort during the procedure.

You may be given oxygen either via a face mask or soft plastic tubing in your nose.

A brief low dose electric shock is given through pads on your chest and back via a defibrillator machine.

Your heartbeat is watched to ensure that normal rhythm has been restored.

## **After the procedure**

You will need to stay in hospital for approximately 4 – 6 hours after the procedure. (Under certain circumstances you may need to stay in hospital for a longer period.) Once you are fully alert you may eat and drink. You will need to arrange for a relative/friend to drive you home. You should not drive or make any important decisions for the next 24 hours. Once you are fully alert you may eat and drink. The skin on your chest may be a little sore for a day or so after the procedure. On your return home, return to your normal daily routine. Ensure that you take your medication as directed.

## **Conclusion**

In most cases normal rhythm is restored. Some people may require repeat cardioversion. Please contact your doctor if you feel any of the symptoms you previously felt or are concerned in any way.

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