

IMPLANTABLE LOOP RECORDER

What is a Loop Recorder?

An implantable loop recorder is a device used to diagnose unexplained recurrent fainting or other symptoms such as palpitations, light-headedness or dizziness. The device is smaller than a packet of chewing gum (about the size of a standard USB stick) and is inserted just beneath the skin in the upper chest area. The insertion of the device is a simple outpatient procedure, which takes approximately 15-20 minutes in the Cardiac Catheterisation Lab.

Pre-Implant

There is no need to fast prior to the procedure.

Ask your cardiologist whether you should withhold any medicines (eg blood thinning medications) before the procedure. Finally, bring your medicines to the procedure.

Your cardiologist may prescribe a sedative before the procedure. A nurse will clean and shave the area of implantation – this prevents infection. An ECG and blood pressure monitor will monitor your heart rate and blood pressure during the procedure.

The Implant

On your arrival to the Cardiac Catheterisation Lab, you will be placed onto a large x-ray table, with surrounding equipment. Nurses will prepare you for the procedure by placing ECG electrodes on your chest, cleansing your chest area with antiseptic solution and covering you with a sterile drape.

You will be awake during the procedure and should experience very little discomfort. Your doctor may administer medication to help you relax. Your doctor will inject your upper chest with a local anaesthetic that will numb the area. After the local anaesthetic has taken effect, your doctor will make a small 2cm nick in your skin. The loop recorder will then be slipped under the skin. The edges of the wound will be sewn with dissolvable stitches. The entire procedure will take only 15 – 20 minutes. A small waterproof dressing will be applied over the incision.

Post Insertion

After the insertion, you will be returned to a recovery area where you will need to wait for an hour before discharge. During that time, a Technician will instruct you on how to use the recorder's activator.

Discharge

When you visit your local doctor or cardiologist 7 to 10 working days after your implantation they will remove your dressing. The dressing is waterproof.

Call HeartRx on 4031 2188 promptly if you have:

- Redness, swelling, or pain around the incision site
- Fever
- Ooze or bleeding from the incision site

How the Recorder Works

The Implantable Loop Recorder monitors the rate and rhythm of the heart. It works much like a black box in an airplane, whereby vital information is recorded during the actual fainting episode and can be played back later for detailed analysis. The recorder can record the heart's rate and rhythm for up to 3 years.

To capture and store the electrocardiogram (ECG) as it occurs at the time of the fainting episode, a patient places a hand-held, pager-sized Activator over the Loop Recorder after waking from an episode, and presses a button. A family member or friend also can be the one to place the Activator over the patient's device to save the information. It is important for the patient to keep the Activator handy at all times (clipped to the clothes or looped over a belt).

If symptoms or an event occur, please contact our nurse at HeartRx and an appointment will be made for you to return to HeartRx. Your Cardiologist analyses the stored information and determines whether the fainting episode was caused by an abnormal heart rhythm. Once the Cardiologist determines this, the device is removed and either treatment is begun or the patient is referred to other specialists.

You will also return to your cardiologist for a routine check of the device every 6 months.