

# Cardioversion

## General Information

Your doctor wants you to have a cardioversion. This process uses a small amount of electrical energy to make your irregular or rapid heartbeat regular and slower. The energy is given to your heart through special patches on your chest.

The procedure is done at the hospital. The health care staff includes a cardiologist (a heart doctor), anesthesiologist (a doctor of anesthesia) and a specially-trained nurse.

The process may take two hours or longer.

## Tests You May Need Before the Procedure

You may need to visit your clinic the day of the procedure to have two screening tests before your cardioversion.

- A 12-lead EKG (electrocardiogram):  
This painless test measures the electrical activity of your heart. Electrodes (small patches) are placed on your chest, arms and legs. The electrodes are attached to a machine that records your heart's electrical activity.
- An INR (international normalized ration):  
This is a blood test to measure the clotting ability of your blood.

You will receive information if you need one or both of these tests.

## Before the Procedure

- Please arrange to have someone drive you home. You will not be able to drive the day of your procedure.
- Someone will need to stay with you for 12 hours after the procedure.
- Do not eat or drink anything for six hours before the procedure.
- Take your regular medicine(s) as directed.
- At the hospital you will be asked to sign a consent form.

## During the Procedure

- You will be hooked up to machines that will show your blood pressure, heart rhythm, and oxygen supply.
- You will have patches placed on your chest. These patches will be attached to the cardioverter/defibrillator that will supply the electrical energy to your heart.

- A nurse will start an intravenous (IV) line so you can receive medicine (sedative) to make you sleepy.
- Your doctor and nurse will start the cardioversion after you are asleep.
- The cardioversion should take only a few minutes.

### **After the Procedure**

- You will be monitored.
- You will wake up within 15 minutes of the procedure.
- You may feel drowsy for about one hour.
- You will be able to go home about 1-2 hours after the procedure. Have your family member or friend bring you home and stay with you to make sure you have recovered from the sedative.
- You may have tenderness in your chest. This will go away in a few days.
- The patches may leave your skin the color of a sunburn. If you feel discomfort, your doctor may give you a prescription for a medicated cream.

### **Follow –up Information**

Your doctor and nurse will speak with you about a follow-up appointment and medicines.