

Cardioversion

What is Cardioversion?

Cardioversion is a procedure that treats an irregular or fast heartbeat. The goal is to restore your heart to a normal rhythm.

These arrhythmias can cause blood clots which have the potential to cause significant medical issues, including stroke.

Why do I Need Cardioversion?

- **Treatment of symptoms.** *Arrhythmia* can cause dizziness, tiredness, chest discomfort, or shortness of breath.
- **Prevent blood clots.** Arrhythmia increases the chance that blood clots will form in your heart. If a clot leaves your heart, it can cause a stroke or other serious problems.

How is Cardioversion Done?

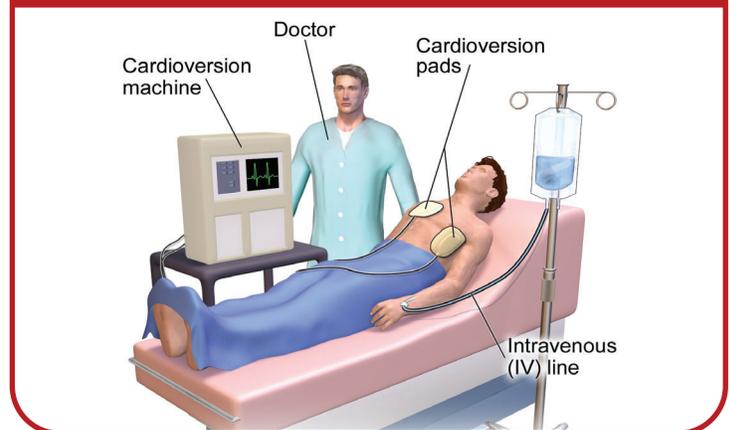
During cardioversion, electrode pads are placed on your chest and on your side. A brief shock is sent to your heart, interrupting the abnormal heart rhythm, causing the heart to beat normally.

What Happens During Cardioversion?

This procedure should only take several minutes to complete

- **You will be given a sedative to help you relax.** This will ensure you do not feel anything during the procedure.
- **Your doctor will send a brief electrical current to your heart** through the electrode pads. *Most often, your heartbeat will return to normal immediately. If your heartbeat does not return to normal, your doctor will try again, possibly, even a third time if the second shock fails to convert your heartbeat back to normal.* If your heartbeat is not normal after the third attempt, your doctor will stop the procedure.
- **The medical team will monitor your Heartbeat, Heart Rhythm, Oxygen Level, and Breathing,** throughout the procedure.
 - Because they will be monitoring you throughout the procedure, your medical team will be able to see if your heartbeat has been corrected instantly.

Cardioversion is performed to correct irregular heart rates in order to restore normal rhythm



What do I need to do next?

- **Talk with your doctor about the risks and benefits for this procedure. Be sure to ask all questions that you have.**
- **Take all medications as directed by your doctor.**

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How do I Get Ready for this Procedure?

- **Take all prescribed anticoagulants (blood thinners) before your procedure.**
- **Inform your doctor of all medications that you are taking.** This includes *over-the-counter medications, inhalers, patches, vitamins, and herbal remedies*. Some of these medications can interfere with your blood thinners. Please speak with your doctor before taking any new medications.
- **Follow all directions on when, y or if you need to stop eating or drinking prior to your procedure.** If you need water to take pills, please speak with your healthcare team for advise.
- **Do not apply any lotions or creams to your chest or back the day of the procedure.** *This can make it difficult for the cardioversion patches to properly adhere to your skin.*
- **Arrange for a ride to and from SWCVA on the day of the procedure and plan to take the day off work or school.** Do not drive for the next 24 hours. Ask for someone to stay at home with you for the remainder of the day.

What Happens After Your Procedure?

After your procedure you may be moved to a recovery area, where you will wait until you are cleared to go home.

- *You may spend several hours in recovery for observation before going home.*

When you get home:

- **Rest and relax.** It is possible that you will feel weak and fatigued following the procedure, due to the sedative given during the procedure. **Be careful** when walking or climbing stairs. Do not drive or operate heavy machinery, go to work, or make important decisions, for the next 24 hours.
- **Take medications as prescribed by your doctor.** You may need to continue to take blood thinners or heart rhythm medication for several weeks or months following the procedure, *even if successful.*
- **It is not uncommon to have red areas on your skin where the cardioversion pads were placed.** The areas may be tender, however, the soreness and redness should subside within a few days.

Contact your doctor if you experience the following:

- Persisting pain or skin irritation at the site of the cardioversion paddles.
- Fever (100° F or above)
- Severe pain, redness or swelling.
- **Chest pain. If not relieved by medication, CALL 911.**