

What is an implantable loop recorder?

An implantable loop recorder is a small device (about the size of a USB stick) that records your heart rhythms continuously over a period of time as determined by your doctor. It is inserted under your skin on the left side of your chest and can remain in place for up to three years. It is useful in picking up infrequent heart abnormalities that a standard electrocardiogram or holter monitor would not over a shorter time period. It can help your doctor understand symptoms such as fainting, dizziness, palpitations and seizures and aid diagnoses of a number of heart conditions.

What does it involve?

A minor hospital procedure

Having an implantable loop recorder insertion takes about 15-20 minutes and is performed in hospital under local anaesthetic. During the procedure you will be awake, however your doctor may offer a sedative to help you relax.



One type of loop recorder available – about 4.5cm long
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The skin under your left collarbone will be cleaned and a local anaesthetic will be injected into the area so that you don't feel any pain. Your cardiologist will then make a small incision and gently insert the loop recorder into the same spot. Once the device is in position, the incision will be stitched and your wound dressed.

Throughout the procedure, your heartbeat and blood pressure will be monitored and you may have an intravenous drip attached to administer medication and further anaesthetic if needed.

After the procedure, you will be moved to a recovery ward for around 60 minutes and once all ok, you will be free to go home. Most patients can return home on the same day as the procedure. Your cardiologist will advise if any driving restrictions apply.

Recording your symptoms

At the hospital, you will be given a separate device with a button to press every time you experience a symptom such as dizziness, palpitations, light headedness or fainting. This will allow your cardiologist to review your heart rhythms at those times and gauge what is happening. You will be given comprehensive instructions on how to use this at the time.

What happens after the loop recorder insertion?

Once you have returned home, you can continue with your normal activities. You may feel mild discomfort at the site of insertion which can usually be relieved with simple painkillers such as paracetamol. Your cardiologist will advise which painkillers you may use. If you experience any signs of infection (such as fever, swelling, redness, oozing from the wound), please contact your cardiologist.

Continue to record your symptoms by pressing the button on the separate device that you are given. Your cardiologist will be able to monitor this remotely and will call you if anything presents that needs urgent attention.

Implantable loop recorder

General information



About one week after the insertion, your cardiologist will check your wound at a follow-up appointment at the clinic. You will also need to attend regular reviews at the clinic for as long as the loop recorder remains in place.

Do I need to prepare?

- You may need to stop certain medications such as blood thinners prior to the procedure. Your cardiologist will advise if this applies to you.
- You will need to fast for a few hours prior to your procedure. A hospital representative will call you the day before and advise from what time you need to stop eating/drinking.
- If you are expected to need certain medications during the procedure, driving restrictions may apply. Your cardiologist will let you know if this is the case.

Are there any risks associated with a loop recorder insertion?

This procedure is generally very safe however some complications include bruising, bleeding and infection.

When will the loop recorder be removed?

The loop recorder can remain in place for up to three years to monitor your heart rhythms. However, in most cases, the loop recorder will allow your cardiologist will be able to make a diagnosis much sooner (within weeks or months), after which it can be removed. This is a similar procedure to the insertion, and is performed in hospital.

What will I need to pay?

As a loop recorder insertion is a hospital procedure, your out-of-pocket costs will depend on whether you are admitted as a private or public patient. If you have private health insurance and have the procedure done at a private hospital, your health fund will generally cover a portion of the cost. Our patient services team can provide you with an estimate.

If you are admitted as a public patient to a public hospital, your costs will be covered by Medicare, however you may need to wait longer to have the procedure performed.

Any questions or concerns?

Please call us on:

Chatswood clinic: (02) 9411 3930

Dee Why clinic: (02) 9133 7050