

Decision Aid: Pacemaker^b

	Heart Failure: Should I Get a Pacemaker (Cardiac Resynchronization Therapy)?*	Hear Rate Problems: Should I Get a Pacemaker? †		
Section 1: Get the facts				
Your Options	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Get a pacemaker for heart failure • Don't get a pacemaker for heart failure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Get a pacemaker for heart failure • Don't get a pacemaker for heart failure 		
Key points to remember	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A pacemaker for heart failure, also called cardiac resynchronization therapy or CRT, can help you feel better so you can do your daily activities. It also may help keep you out of the hospital and help you live longer. • If you get a pacemaker, you still need to take medicines for heart failure. You'll also need to follow a healthy lifestyle to help treat heart failure. This may include watching how much fluid you drink, eating healthy foods that are low in salt, and not smoking. • Heart experts have guidelines about who might need a pacemaker. A pacemaker may be a good choice if you have moderate or severe heart failure and your heart's ventricles don't pump at the same time. • A pacemaker sends electrical pulses to your heart to help it work better. You can't feel the pulses. • There can be problems from having a pacemaker placed in your chest. The wires (called leads) that connect the pacemaker to your heart can move from the spot where they were placed. You could get an infection where the pacemaker was placed. Or the pacemaker or leads might not work. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A pacemaker can help you feel better so you can return to your daily activities. • A pacemaker sends electrical pulses to your heart to help it work better. You can't feel the pulses. • If you get a pacemaker, you may still need to take medicines. You'll also need to follow a healthy lifestyle to help your heart. Eat heart-healthy foods, and don't smoke. • Heart experts have guidelines about who might need a pacemaker. A pacemaker may be a good choice if your heart rate is very slow and you have symptoms like dizziness or fainting. • There can be problems from having a pacemaker placed in your chest. The wires (called leads) that connect the pacemaker to your heart can move from the spot where they were placed. You could get an infection where the pacemaker was placed. Or the pacemaker or leads might not work. 		
Frequently asked questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How can a pacemaker help heart failure? • How is the pacemaker placed? • Who can have a pacemaker for heart failure? • What are the benefits of having a pacemaker for heart failure? • What are the risks of having a pacemaker for heart failure? • Why might your doctor recommend a pacemaker for heart failure? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is a pacemaker? • What heart rate problems can a pacemaker help? • How is a pacemaker placed? • What are the risks and side effects? • Why might your doctor recommend a pacemaker for a heart rate problem? 		
Section 2: Compare Options				
	Get an ICD	Don't get an ICD	Get an ICD	Don't get an ICD
What is usually involved?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Your doctor will numb the area so you won't feel pain. (This is not open-chest surgery). • It can take up to 2 to 3 hours to place the pacemaker. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You take medicines for heart failure. Your doctor may change the type or dose of your medicines. • You have to eat healthy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You will have minor surgery to have the pacemaker put in. The doctor will numb the area so you won't feel pain. • It can take up to 2 to 3 hours to place the pacemaker. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You take medicines for whatever disease is causing your heart rate problem. • You eat healthy foods,

^b Heart Failure: Should I Get a Pacemaker (Cardiac Resynchronization Therapy)? Healthwise Knowledgebase 2010.
Heart Rate Problems: Should I Get a Pacemaker? Healthwise Knowledgebase 2011.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You may spend the night in the hospital You will need regular checkups to make sure that the pacemaker is working and to adjust the pacing, if needed. You still need to take medicines for heart failure. You still have to eat healthy foods and exercise as your doctor advises. You also may need to limit salt and fluids. 	<p>foods and exercise as your doctor advises. You also may need to limit salt and fluids.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> You may have to see your doctor often to check your symptoms and how your medicine is working. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You may spend the night in the hospital to make sure that the device is working and that there are no problems. You will need regular checkups to make sure that the pacemaker is working and to adjust the pacing, if needed. You may still need to take medicines for your heart rate problem. You still have to eat healthy foods and to exercise as your doctor advises. 	<p>and you exercise as your doctor advises.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> You see your doctor regularly to check your symptoms and how your medicine is working.
What are the benefits?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A pacemaker can help you feel better so you can be more active. It can help keep you out of the hospital and help you live longer. It can help your heart pump better by changing the shape of your heart. In heart failure, the left ventricle often gets too big as it tries to make up for not pumping well. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You won't have the risk of infection or other problems from the surgery. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A pacemaker can help you feel better so you can be more active. If your risk for getting a heartbeat problem is high, a pacemaker can help prevent that from happening. If your heart rate problems are due to heart block, a pacemaker may help you live longer. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You won't have the risk of infection or other problems from the surgery. You won't have to think about safety around devices that could stop your pacemaker from working.
What are the risks and side effects?	<p>The risks from surgery are usually low. But they may be different for each person. Here are some possible risks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A lead could treat the heart. A lung could collapse from a build-up of air in the space between the lung and the chest wall. You could get an infection in the chest. The doctor might not be able to place the pacemaker. For example, a vein could be too small to place a lead. <p>After surgery, you may have some other risks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> You will need surgery to replace the battery, which lasts 8 to 10 years. If a lead breaks or the pacemaker stops working, you may need another surgery to fix the problem. Some devices with strong magnetic or electrical fields could stop the pacemaker from working. You need to avoid MRI machines, battery-powered cordless power tools, and CB or ham radios. But most everyday appliances 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Your symptoms could get worse. This would limit your ability to do your daily activities. If your heart failure gets worse, you may have to go into the hospital a lot. You might not live as long as you could if you had a pacemaker. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Problems can happen during or soon after the procedure. Examples include a lead tearing the heart or a lung collapsing. There might be problems with the pacemaker wires like infection or breaks. Some devices with strong magnetic or electrical fields could stop the pacemaker from working. You need to avoid MRI machines, battery-powered cordless power tools, and CB or ham radios. But most everyday appliances and electric devices are safe. You will need surgery to replace the battery, which lasts 8 to 10 years. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Your symptoms could get worse. This would limit your ability to do your daily activities You might be at risk for fainting or falling, which could be dangerous.

	and electric devices are safe.					
Personal stories	Are you interested in what others decided to do? Many people have faced this decision. These personal stories may help you decide.					
Section 3: Patient Values						
What matters most to you?						
Reasons to get a pacemaker				Reasons not to get a pacemaker		
I want to feel better so that I can do my daily activity				I'm not having too much trouble doing my daily activity		
1 More important	2	3	4 Equally important	5	6	7 More important
I don't mind having a device in my chest				I don't like the idea of having a device in my chest		
1 More important	2	3	4 Equally important	5	6	7 More important
My medicines aren't controlling my symptoms anymore				My symptoms aren't getting worse		
1 More important	2	3	4 Equally important	5	6	7 More important
I'm not worried about risks of surgery, because they're small				I don't want to take a chance that something could go wrong during surgery		
1 More important	2	3	4 Equally important	5	6	7 More important
My other important reasons:				My other important reasons:		
1 More important	2	3	4 Equally important	5	6	7 More important
Section 4: Your Decision						
Where are you leaning now?						
Getting a pacemaker				NOT getting a pacemaker		
1 Leaning toward	2	3	4 Undecided	5	6	7 Leaning toward
Section 5: Quiz Yourself						
What else do you need to make your decision?						
Check the facts	4. I don't need a pacemaker if I have mild heart failure and can still do my daily activities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> True <input type="radio"/> False <input type="radio"/> I'm not sure 2. A pacemaker could help me stay out of the hospital and live longer <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> True <input type="radio"/> False <input type="radio"/> I'm not sure 3. If I get a pacemaker, I still need to take medicines for heart failure and follow a healthy lifestyle <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> True <input type="radio"/> False <input type="radio"/> I'm not sure 			1. If I get a pacemaker, I still need to follow a healthy lifestyle <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> True <input type="radio"/> False <input type="radio"/> I'm not sure 2. I don't need a pacemaker if I don't have any symptoms <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> True <input type="radio"/> False <input type="radio"/> I'm not sure 3. A pacemaker may help symptoms caused by my heart rate problem <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> True <input type="radio"/> False <input type="radio"/> I'm not sure 		

Decide what's next	1. Yes No Do you understand the options available to you? 2. Yes No Are you clear about which benefits and side effects matter most to you? 3. Yes No Do you have enough support and advice from others to make a choice?														
Certainty	1. How sure do you feel right now about your decision? <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 14.28%; text-align: center;">1</td> <td style="width: 14.28%; text-align: center;">2</td> <td style="width: 14.28%; text-align: center;">3</td> <td style="width: 14.28%; text-align: center;">4</td> <td style="width: 14.28%; text-align: center;">5</td> <td style="width: 14.28%; text-align: center;">6</td> <td style="width: 14.28%; text-align: center;">7</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">Not at all</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td style="text-align: center;">Somewhat sure</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td style="text-align: center;">Very sure</td> </tr> </table>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Not at all			Somewhat sure			Very sure
1	2	3	4	5	6	7									
Not at all			Somewhat sure			Very sure									
	2. Check what you need to do before you make this decision. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ I'm ready to take action ○ I want to discuss the options with others ○ I want to learn more about my options 														
	3. Use the following space to list questions, concerns, and next steps.														
Section 6: Your summary Here's a record of your answers. You can use it to talk with your doctor or loved ones about your decision.															

* Details available at: http://www.healthwise.net/cochrane_decisionaid/Content/StdDocument.aspx?DOCHWID=uf9843;
 information on validation available at: <http://decisionaid.ohri.ca/AZsumm.php?ID=1328>

† Details available at: http://www.healthwise.net/cochrane_decisionaid/Content/StdDocument.aspx?DOCHWID=abk4063;
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