



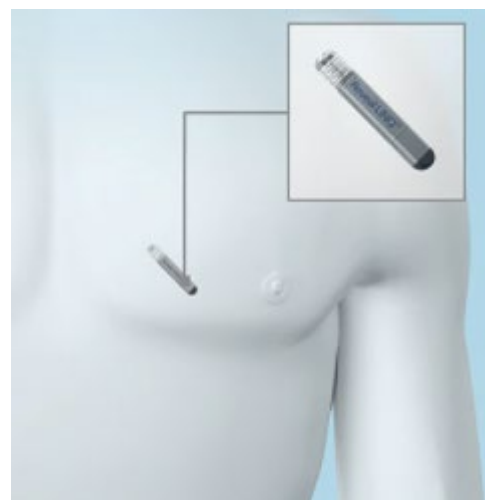
# Having an insertable cardiac monitor (ICM)

This leaflet explains what an ICM does and how it is inserted.

## What is an insertable cardiac monitor (ICM)?

An ICM is a small medical device around the size of a pen lid that is inserted under the skin, usually in the left upper chest area. It monitors your heart rate and rhythm and can take an automatic recording when it detects that your heart rate is too fast or too slow. If you have symptoms, you can also take a manual recording by pushing a button on a small hand-held activator, which will capture the rhythm for a period before, during and after pushing the button.

The ICM can help determine if symptoms such as fainting, or palpitations are related to a heart rhythm disturbance. It is a diagnostic tool and will not provide any therapy when you have symptoms. An ICM is discreet and does not interfere with your daily activities.



*Reveal LINQ insertable cardiac monitor:  
Image provided courtesy of Medtronic*

## Why do I need an ICM?

An ICM can help to answer questions about your heart that other heart-monitoring devices cannot. It is particularly useful if you have infrequent symptoms and can monitor your heart rhythm for up to three years.

Capturing your heart rate and rhythm before, during and after a symptomatic event helps your doctor decide whether an abnormal heart rhythm is the cause of your symptoms and so determine the best treatment for you.

The doctor usually recommends an ICM if you have symptoms of dizziness, palpitations, fainting or blackouts. You may have already had an ECG, a holter monitor (portable device for heart monitoring) or an event recorder fitted, which has not found the cause of your symptoms. The ICM is in place for a longer period, so there is a much better chance of showing whether your symptoms may be related to an abnormal heart rhythm.

## What do I do before the procedure?

On the day of the procedure, you will be admitted to our cardiac day ward, which is known as the 'Jim Shahi Unit' (JSU), located on level 1 in Battle Block. The JSU is an emergency unit so there may be unforeseen delays. Please bring in something to occupy you while you wait.

- You do not need to do anything special to prepare for this procedure.
- You may have a light breakfast and drink as normal prior to the procedure.
- Please continue to take your regular medications.

- Tell the member of staff looking after you if you have any allergies.

### **What are the risks and benefits?**

Inserting an ICM is quick, safe and minimally invasive with low risks. Complications are generally rare but may include:

- Bleeding, bruising and pain around the implantation site (common).
- Development of an enlarged raised scar (keloid) that can be skin-coloured, pink or darker than the surrounding area.
- Infection at the device site or the device emerging through the skin. This can be treated with antibiotics but may require removal of the device.
- Risk of the device migrating, which may require it to be repositioned or removed.

### **What happens during an ICM implant?**

The device will be inserted by a nurse, cardiac physiologist, or doctor. The risks and benefits will be explained to you, and you can raise any questions you might have. You will then be asked to sign a consent form.

The insertion is straightforward and is done as a day case procedure in the JSU. It takes about 15 minutes and does not require sedation or major surgery.

- Your left upper chest area will be cleaned with an antiseptic solution and a sterile covering will be placed over it.
- Local anaesthetic will then be injected into the skin where the device will be placed. This will sting initially but the skin will soon become numb.
- A small incision is made and the ICM is inserted beneath the skin in the left upper chest area, over the pectoral muscle. The device is usually positioned 45 degrees relative to the breastbone, over the fourth rib space. The ICM is manufactured by Medtronic and is called a LINQ device. It is inserted according to the Medtronic guidelines.
- The small incision is closed with steri-strips (thin adhesive bandages) and a dry dressing. No stitches are used during this procedure.

### **What happens after the ICM implant?**

After the ICM has been inserted, you will remain in the JSU, where your pulse and blood pressure will be monitored, and you can have a hot drink. You will need to recover for up to 30 minutes before going home. You will be able to drive yourself home and do not need anyone else to accompany you. You will be given an ICM information pack to read and take home with you.

The cardiac physiologist will discuss how to use the ICM activator to do a manual recording when you have symptoms. They will also discuss and set up remote monitoring and will organise a post-implant check for six weeks' time.



*My Carelink remote monitor:  
Image provided courtesy of  
Medtronic*

We will give you advice on wound care. You should keep the wound dry for seven days. If you notice any signs of redness, swelling, oozing, or bleeding from the wound, or an elevated temperature, please contact the Cardiac Rhythm Management (CRM) team so that this can be dealt with as soon as possible. The Cardiac Care Unit (CCU) can be contacted out of hours (contact details below).

**You will be given an ID card that you should always keep with you. This is particularly important when attending a hospital or a dental appointment and when travelling.**

You can have an MRI scan if you have a LINQ device. Please ring the CRM clinic ahead of time if you require a scan, as information may need to be downloaded from your device prior to the scan.

**If you have any questions about your appointment, please contact the CRM/devices clinic on 0118 322 6636.**

### Useful contact information

Cardiac Rhythm Management (CRM)/ devices clinic: 0118 322 6636 (Mon - Fri, 8am -6pm)  
Jim Shahi Unit (JSU): 0118 322 6502 (Mon - Fri, 8am -6pm)  
Cardiac Care Unit (CCU): 0118 322 6684 (Mon - Sun, 6pm - 8am)  
British Heart Foundation: [www.bhf.org.uk](http://www.bhf.org.uk)  
Arrhythmia Alliance [www.hearhythmalliance.org/aa/uk/diagnosis](http://www.hearhythmalliance.org/aa/uk/diagnosis)  
Medtronic website: [www.medtronic.com/uk-en/patients/treatments-therapies/heart-monitors/our-monitors/reveal-linq-icm.html](http://www.medtronic.com/uk-en/patients/treatments-therapies/heart-monitors/our-monitors/reveal-linq-icm.html)

This leaflet is printed privately for the Cardiac Fund. It was set up in 1976 for the purpose of providing cardiac services that would otherwise not be available through National Health resources. Our Cardiac Laboratory was equipped through the fund and many other areas in the Department have also benefited from equipment and staff training.

If you would like to contribute, please scan the QR code below to donate direct to the fund online, alternatively, cheques should be made payable to:

### The Royal Berks Charity Cardiac Fund U226

Royal Berks Charity  
Royal Berkshire NHS Foundation Trust London Road  
Reading RG1 5AN Telephone 0118 322 8860 [www.royalberkscharity.co.uk](http://www.royalberkscharity.co.uk)

To find out more about our Trust visit [www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk](http://www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk)



**Please ask if you need this information in another language or format.**

RBFT Cardiac Rhythm Management Clinic, January 2025  
Next review due: January 2027