



The Heart Rhythm Charity

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Implantable Loop Recorder (ILR)

If a doctor is unable to diagnose the cause of your symptoms with an ECG and a 24 hour monitor, then they may consider an Implantable Loop Recorder (ILR).

An ILR is used to monitor heart rhythms for months at a time if the episodes are less frequent than every 30 days. The device can remain in place for up to three years.

The ILR can determine whether your fainting is related to a heart rhythm problem.

How is the ILR fitted?

An ILR is a thin device which is inserted just beneath the skin in the chest area. This procedure is carried out in a day clinic and will take between 15 – 20 minutes. A local anaesthetic is used to numb a small area of your skin. Once the device has been positioned under the skin the wound can then be stitched.

A small dressing will be applied and you will be advised when to remove it. You may be given antibiotics to minimise infection. The wound should be kept clean and dry until it is fully healed, although it is safe to bathe and shower.

What happens after the ILR is fitted?

A cardiac physiologist will program the ILR to the required settings, this only takes a few minutes. Programming and data retrieval is done by radiofrequency, and this procedure is painless. Before you are discharged the physiologist will explain how and when to use your activator.

How do I capture and record an episode?

An ILR can capture your heart's activities during a blackout. This will allow the doctor to diagnose or rule out an abnormal heart rhythm.

To capture and record an episode, you are required to place a hand held activator over the ILR. When in place, press the button in order for the device to save the information. This should be done whilst experiencing symptoms or as near to the event as possible.

It is important to carry the activator with you so that any episode can be recorded.

You will then be asked to return to the ECG department of the hospital for the results to be downloaded.

You may have received a loop recorder with remote capabilities. This will mean you can send any stored information to your doctor via a phone line from your own home without having to go to hospital.

In some instances, these results may produce a diagnosis. If so, the ILR may be removed and appropriate treatment will be given.

Removing your ILR

Once your heart's activity has been recorded during your symptoms and the doctor is satisfied that any heart-related causes are identified or ruled out, the device will be removed.

The removal of the ILR is similar to when you had it implanted and can be carried out in a day clinic.