



## **Cardioversion Preparation & Information**

### **What is Cardioversion?**

Cardioversion is a medical procedure done to restore a normal heart rhythm for people who have certain types of abnormal heartbeats (arrhythmias). Cardioversion is most often done by sending electric shocks to your heart through electrodes placed on your chest. Occasionally, your doctor may perform cardioversion using only medications to restore your heart's rhythm.

**Preparation:** Do not eat or drink anything after midnight the evening before the test, or at least 6 hours prior. Take all medications as prescribed, but drink only small sips of water with pills. If diabetic, check with your doctor about how to adjust your diabetic medications. Those taking anticoagulants (such as Coumadin, Pradaxa, Xarelto, Eliquis, Plavix, etc.) should continue these medications unless otherwise instructed.

Wear comfortable clothes to the hospital. The patient will change into a hospital gown prior to the procedure. It is best not to wear any jewelry or valuables. Most patients will be able to go home after the test. A companion will be required to drive the patient home as sedation is used during the procedure. Sedation given during the procedure causes drowsiness, dizziness and impairs your judgment, making it unsafe for you to drive or operate machinery. Some chest wall tenderness (similar to a sunburn) may be present for a few days after the cardioversion. Your doctor may recommend creams or over-the-counter medications to help with this possible issue.

**Location:** Transesophageal echocardiograms are performed at the hospital

**What to Expect:** The patient lies on a bed and a nurse will start an intravenous (IV) line into the arm or hand in order to give medications and fluids during the procedure. The nurse will connect the patient to several monitors. Electrode patches will be attached to the chest and upper back. Men may have their chest hair shaved for electrode placement. A medication will be given through the IV to cause sleep. While asleep, the doctor will use a special machine that delivers specific amounts of energy through the patches to the heart muscle to restore a normal heart rhythm. Although this procedure only takes a few seconds, several attempts may be needed. In some people, a moderately invasive imaging test called a transesophageal echocardiogram (TEE) may be performed prior to the cardioversion to make sure the heart is free from blood clots. The TEE is performed by swallowing a narrow tube with a ultrasound probe at its tip that can be placed against the back wall of the heart. Testing takes approximately 1 hour.

**After the Test:** After you have recovered from the sedation, you may go home or to your other scheduled appointments. You may feel a temporary soreness or numbness in your throat after the test. Wait at least one hour after the test (or until the numbness in your throat is gone) before eating or drinking. Start by drinking a cool liquid. If you have no problems drinking cool liquids, eat and drink as you normally would. After the cardiologist reviews your test, the results will go into your electronic medical record. Your physician will have access to the results and will discuss them with you.