

Sexual Health for Patients with an Implantable Cardioverter Defibrillator (ICD)

Can I have intimate relationships after my ICD implant?

For most people with an implantable cardiac defibrillator (ICD), it's safe to resume sexual activity once the surgical site is healed. If your provider says you can exercise and be active, then it's safe for you to have sex.

What if I am concerned about resuming sexual activity?

If you or your partner are worried about resuming sexual activity, talk with your provider about your concerns. They can give you support and advice.

What if I receive a shock during sex?

Many people who have ICDs worry they may get shocked during sex. It's unlikely you will get a shock during sex because your ICD is programmed to manage normal rises in heart rate. If you do receive a shock during sex, you will follow your shock plan instructions on when to call your provider.

Will my partner get shocked?

If your device does shock you during sex, your partner is not in any danger. They may feel a tingling sensation. This will not harm your partner in any way or cause pain.

How can I prepare for sexual activity?

The following tips can help you safely return to sexual activity:

- Confirm that you are able to resume sexual activity with your provider
- Talk to your partner about activities that both of you feel comfortable engaging in ahead of time.
- Plan for sexual activity when you are relaxed.
- Plan for plenty of time to rest both before and after sex.
- Moderate your food and alcohol activity before sex. It is important for you to drink water before and after engaging in sex.

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Author: Bethany Lee-Lehner, MSN, RN
Reviewers: Pam Falk, RN
Edited by: Karelyn Munro, BA
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