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ELECTRO-PHYSIOLOGICAL STUDIES

An electro-physiological study is a test of the electrical system of the heart. It is performed in hospital in a catheter laboratory under local anaesthetic and sedation.

A thin tube is placed in the vein in the groin and fed up towards the heart. The heart is examined for any evidence of abnormal electrical pathways or a tendency to slow heart beats or racing heart.

It could be performed for symptoms of palpitations or black outs.

Sometimes as part of this procedure more specialised treatment options may be undertaken depending on the results of the testing. These include ablation of abnormal electrical pathways or the implantation of a pacemaker.

Preparing for the Procedure – What do you need to do?

You will need to fast for six hours prior to the procedure. You will be asked to arrive at hospital on the day of the procedure. Medications should be taken as directed by your physician. Blood thinning medications may need to be withheld before the procedure. You may also be asked to stop any heart rhythm medication several days prior to the procedure.

Possible Complications And Risk

Bleeding may occur. Abnormal heart rhythms may also surface, requiring other treatments such as cardioversion or pace makers. Rarely, surgery may be required.

After the Procedure

You will be discharged from the hospital on the day of the procedure. You will have some bruising in the groin and you will be asked to reduce your physical activity for 24 to 48 hours.

Follow-up Care

You will be asked to make an appointment for a short revisit with your cardiologist to go through the results of the test with you. A letter will be sent to your GP highlighting the outcomes of the test.

‘Any surgical or invasive procedure carries risks. Before proceeding, you should seek a second opinion from an appropriately qualified health practitioner.’

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