



Remote Monitoring Systems

Being Monitored from Home

Remote monitoring systems connect patients to clinicians and are designed to provide convenience and peace of mind. Being monitored through a remote system means fewer office visits and less time traveling to and from the device clinic. The monitor collects specific information from your implanted device and sends it to a secure website that your doctor and device office can access. The schedule for information downloaded is set up by the device office. The remote checks do not eliminate the need to come in to the device clinic, but greatly reduces the amount of visits you will make.

Communicator Hook-up

A communicator will be sent to your home for you to connect to your phone line. The unit is small, portable, and easy to use. It is important that you connect your communicator as soon as it arrives so remote monitoring can begin right away. The type of monitor received, either a push button or a touch screen, will depend on the specific type of device implanted. The communicator comes with a DVD as well as written instructions on how to hook it up. Once you plug in the monitor it will guide you through the rest of the set-up. Depending on the type of your device, a blood pressure cuff and weight scale may come with the monitor. You should use these daily and the results will also be transmitted through the phone line.

How it Works

The monitors are designed to operate with a standard analog telephone line, found in most homes. It can work with a digital service line (DSL) if you have a DSL filter. Another option is Voice over Internet (VoIP) phone service if there is an analog phone jack available. The monitor uses your phone line to send a transmission, so if you have other telephone equipment (fax machine, answering machine, computer modem, etc.) connected to the same line and it is in use, the monitor will wait to send the information until the line is free. If you pick up the phone while a transmission is being sent it will disconnect and attempt to send later. If the monitor is sending and an outside call is coming in, the monitor will continue to send and the caller will receive a busy signal. Should you lose power your information will not be lost. The monitor has an internal memory that stores your data in case of power loss or if the monitor is unplugged. When power is restored a message may appear on the screen, just follow the directions to get it working again.

Downloading Information

The latest devices are conveniently wireless and the interrogation takes place automatically, alleviating compliance issues and saving valuable time and effort of manual sends. This can only work if the monitor is plugged in at all times. The monitor has an Action Button that will occasionally blink. Should this happen, press the action button, and follow the on screen directions. Transmissions can be sent any time of the day. If you are not near your monitor at the scheduled time the monitor will connect with you when you are back within range. The length of the transmission will depend on the amount of information your device needs to send. When information is being collected and downloaded you will not feel any different. No nurse or device tech is needed on the phone line during the transmission.

If you will be out of town for longer than two weeks we would like a phone call (985-1000 x205) because the monitor will notify us that it cannot locate you. If you are gone for a few months at a time, the monitor can travel with you. Many patients report a sense of reassurance knowing they can connect to their device care team from anywhere in the United States.

Each monitor is device specific. If a friend or family member also has a defibrillator it will not interfere with the function of your monitor. Likewise, if you are implanted with a new device, a new monitor will be sent to replace the old monitor that communicated with the old device.

Benefits of Remote Monitoring

One of the many benefits to having at home monitoring is the promptness in which changes in the heart rhythm can be detected. Many times the device office will call the patient before the patient is aware there is a problem. This early identification of clinically important issues can help avert emergency department visits. GLHVI will check your device four times a year. You will have a remote check three times (once every three months), and the fourth check will be scheduled in the office. After each remote check the device office will send you a letter regarding the status of your device. Information included might be: battery status, any arrhythmias that occurred since last check, date of the next check. Your information can also be accessed in-between visits to allow for timelier and extensive heart care. Device settings cannot be changed through the monitor, an office visit will have to be made for changes to take place.

Questions

If you are having problems with your communicator and need to troubleshoot, please contact the number that matches the brand of your device.

Medtronic: Carelink 800-929-4043

Boston Scientific: Latitude 866-484-3268

St. Jude: Merlin 877-696-3754