

IDEDECIDE ICD

Better conversations, better decisions

A decision aid for

Implantable Cardioverter-Defibrillators (ICD)

For patients with heart failure considering an ICD who are at risk for sudden cardiac death (primary prevention).

What is an ICD?

An ICD is a small device that is placed under the skin of the chest. Wires (called "leads") connect the ICD to the heart. An ICD is designed to prevent an at-risk person from dying suddenly from a dangerous heart rhythm. When it senses a dangerous heart rhythm, an ICD gives the heart an electrical shock. It does this in order to get the heart to beat normally. An ICD is different than a pacemaker. A pacemaker helps the heart beat but does not give a shock like an ICD.

My doctor has asked me to consider an ICD. Why?

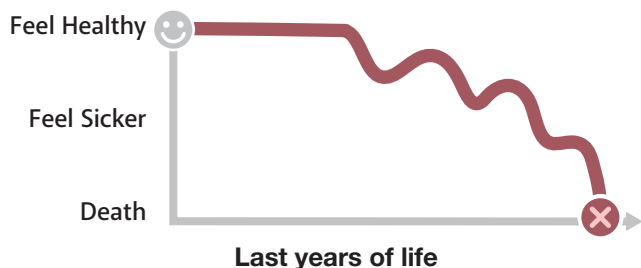
Due to your heart failure, you are at higher risk for developing a dangerous heart rhythm. A dangerous heart rhythm can cause you to die within minutes if not treated.

This is an important decision. While the future is always unpredictable, there is an important trade-off to consider when deciding whether to get an ICD.

Consider two possible paths:

Path 1

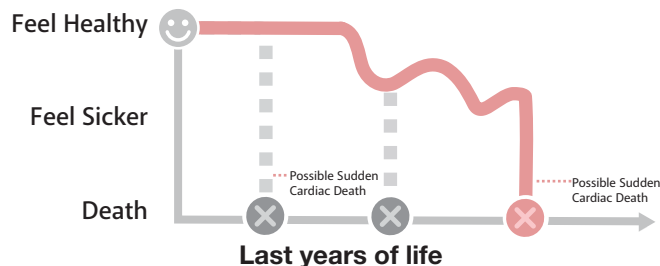
You may choose to get an ICD. You may be feeling like you usually do, then a dangerous heart rhythm could happen. The ICD may help you live longer by treating a dangerous heart rhythm. You will continue to live with heart failure that may get worse over time.



"I'm not ready to die. I have so much I'm trying to stay alive for. Even if it means getting shocked, I'm willing to do anything that can help me live longer."

Path 2

You may choose to NOT get an ICD. You may be feeling like you usually do, and then a dangerous heart rhythm could happen. You may die quickly from the dangerous heart rhythm. This can happen at any time.



"I've lived a good life. The idea of dying quickly sounds like a painless way to go. I've always said I hope to die in my sleep. Going through surgery and getting shocked is not the kind of thing I want."

The numbers below are from recent medical studies. However, no one can know what will happen to any one person.

What are the benefits of getting an ICD?

Results from a 5-year study*



*SCD-HeFT. Bardy, GH, et al. NEJM 2005;352:225-237.

Can the ICD be turned off?

Yes. It is possible to turn off the ICD without surgery. This is even recommended when a person is close to dying of another cause. It is possible to keep the pacemaker turned on. Talk about this with your doctor.

Why would I want to turn off the ICD?

In the future, people may reach a point where living as long as possible is not what they want anymore. This could be because of worsening heart failure or another illness. When this happens, the ICD can be turned off to avoid shocks.

What are the risks of getting an ICD?


Problems do occur:

- 4 out of every 100 patients will experience some bleeding after surgery.
- 2 out of every 100 patients will have a serious problem like damage to the lung or heart.
- About 1 out of every 100 patients will develop an infection.
- Some patients develop anxiety or depression from being shocked.



Over 5 years, about 20 out of every 100 patients get shocked by their ICDs. About 80 out of every 100 will not get shocked. Most shocks happen because of dangerous heart rhythms but some happen when they are not needed.

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