

## What is cardioversion?

- Cardioversion is a procedure that converts certain types of abnormal heart rhythms (arrhythmias) to normal ones. This is done by delivering a mild electrical shock, which is carefully timed to the chest to stop an irregular heart rhythm.
- Cardioversions can be done as a planned outpatient procedure or as an emergency procedure.

## What happens before the test?

- Do not eat or drink for 6 hours prior to your test, unless otherwise instructed by your doctor.
- You may take your medicines with a sip of water, unless otherwise instructed by your doctor.
- Bring your medications with you.
- If the test is done as an outpatient, have someone drive you to the hospital. Also, arrange to have someone drive you home after the test.
- Outpatients should report to Short Stay Care 2 hours prior to the procedure.
- Outpatients should plan to be at the hospital for up to 3 hours.

## Upon arrival

- A staff member will talk with you about the medications you are taking, any medication allergies and the reason you are having the exam.
- You'll be given an explanation of the procedure and asked to sign a consent form.
- You will change into a hospital gown.
- An intravenous (IV) line will be inserted into a vein in your arm.

## What happens during the test?

- You'll be asked to lie on a cart.
- You will be given a sedative through the IV line in your arm to help you relax.
- Your heart rate, blood pressure and oxygen level are carefully monitored throughout the test. You may also be given oxygen.
- Two large sticky patches containing electrodes are attached to the skin on the chest and/or back and are connected to a defibrillator.
- The defibrillator is calibrated by the physician to deliver the proper amount of electrical charge for each patient. Both the intensity and the timing of the electrical charge are precisely controlled.
- Because you receive sedation, you should not feel the charge from the electrical current. Each charge lasts only a second.
- It may require one or more electrical charges to successfully regulate your heart rhythm.



## What happens after the test?

- Your heart rhythm and blood pressure will be monitored after the test.
- There may be some mild irritation or redness to the skin of the chest.
- Your IV will be removed when you are fully awake.
- The nurse will give you any special instructions before you leave, if appropriate.