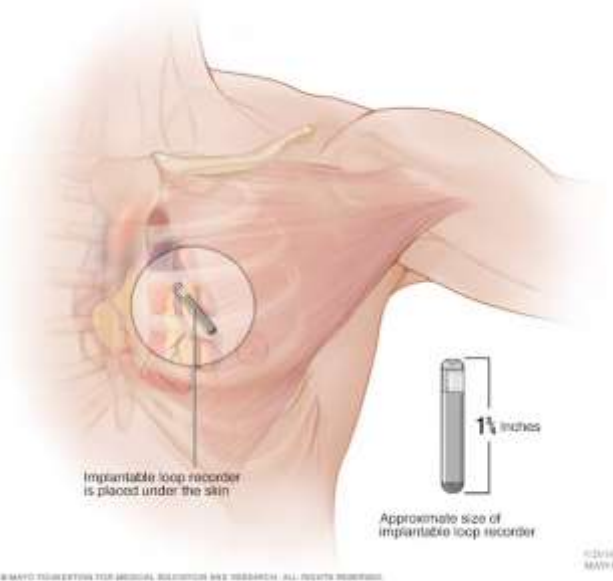


Loop Recorder Placement

A heart monitoring device

An implantable loop recorder is a type of heart-monitoring device that records your heart rhythm continuously for up to three years. It allows your doctor to remotely monitor your heartbeat while you go about your daily activities.

The small device, also called a cardiac event recorder, is placed just under the skin of your chest during a minor surgery.



Why it's done

Your doctor may recommend an implantable loop recorder if you have:

- An abnormal heartbeat (arrhythmia)
- An unexplained stroke
- Unexplained fainting (syncope)

An implantable loop recorder can capture information that a standard electrocardiogram (ECG) or Holter monitor may miss, particularly arrhythmias that are brief or infrequent.

For example, if you're having fainting spells, your doctor will want to know if a problem with your heart is causing your symptoms. A standard ECG only records your heartbeat for a few seconds or minutes. An implantable loop recorder monitors your heartbeat for a much longer time, so it's more likely to capture what your heart is doing if you faint again. Information from an implantable loop recorder can help your doctor confirm a diagnosis and develop your treatment plan.

Your doctor may also recommend an implantable loop recorder if you're at high risk of stroke. Certain arrhythmias, such as atrial fibrillation, increase your risk of stroke.

What you can expect

Before There's no special preparation for an implantable loop recorder.

During An implantable loop recorder is placed under the skin on the chest.

The procedure to insert the heart monitor is usually done in a hospital. You'll be awake for the procedure but may be given medicine to relax you (sedative). The area of skin on the chest is numbed. Your doctor makes a tiny incision, inserts the device and closes the incision. The device will stay in place for up to three years.

After

Complications of the procedure are quite uncommon. However, because minor surgery is done to implant the device, you'll need to watch for signs of infection such as redness or swelling. Your doctor and nurse will tell you what to look for. You may need to limit activities until the wound heals.

You'll be given a transmitting device to place beside your bed. The transmitter automatically sends information from your implant to your doctor while you sleep. You can also push a button to send data immediately when you have symptoms.

Your doctor may ask you to keep a diary of your symptoms and when they occur.

Results

Your doctor will interpret the results of your test and call if he or she has any concerns. You'll likely need to see your doctor once or twice a year for routine checkups while the device is in place.

An implantable loop recorder is invisible and doesn't interfere with your daily activities. It has no patches or wires. You don't have to worry about getting the device wet while bathing or swimming.

An implantable loop recorder is considered safe for use during magnetic resonance imaging (MRI), but always let your doctor know about your implant before you schedule such an imaging test.

It's also possible that an implantable loop recorder might set off metal detectors, for example, at an airport. Your doctor can provide you with a device identification card to carry with you for such situations.