LIVING WITH YOUR CRT DEVICE
CARDIAC RESYNCHRONIZATION THERAPY OVERVIEW

HEART FAILURE (HF) IS A COMMON CONDITION AFFECTING MORE THAN 5 MILLION PEOPLE, with more than 550,000 new cases per year. Cardiac resynchronization therapy (CRT) is used to treat your symptoms and other complications associated with HF.

• CRT devices are small computers that send out electrical impulses to coordinate the contractions of the heart. Further, they pace the heart to improve function.

• While surgery is required, the incision itself is quite small and most patients have only a small bump in their skin from the device and three accompanying leads.

• After having a CRT implanted, patients are given an identification card. This card will alert care providers and others (e.g., airport security) to the presence of the device.

• It is generally safe to travel, operate most machinery, use a cell phone and drive a car after implantation.

This brochure is not intended to take the place of the CRT patient manual accompanying the device or the advice of a medical professional.
CONSIDERING A CRT FOR HEART FAILURE

WHAT IS HEART FAILURE?
Many people wrongly associate Heart Failure (HF) with the stoppage of the heart, and while HF is a progressive disease, it simply refers to a dysfunction in which the lower chambers of the heart do not beat efficiently.

HF has many causes, including coronary artery disease, high blood pressure and abnormal heart rhythms such as atrial fibrillation, heart valve disease, congenital heart disease, diabetes and infection, amongst others. It affects about 5 million Americans, with 550,000 new cases diagnosed each year.

WHY CRT?
While medications and lifestyle changes can help treat your HF symptoms, your doctor may decide that they are not enough for your symptoms and that you need an implanted device. A CRT device can help to coordinate your heart’s contractions, improving efficiency and alleviating HF symptoms.

In addition to treating the symptoms associated with HF, your CRT device can bring about gradual improvement in heart function. Many studies conclude CRT devices improve quality of life in many patients. With CRT, you may feel more energized and, in some cases, may see a reversal of some of the heart damage caused by HF.
WHAT IS CRT?
CRT devices have evolved from pacemaker technology that has been used to treat slow heart rhythms since 1958. CRT-P (the ‘P’ stands for Pacemaker) devices are actually small, battery-powered computers that are usually implanted just underneath the skin in the chest area. These devices are connected to two or three different wires placed in different parts of the heart, providing electrical stimuli. Many patients will receive a CRT-D (the ‘D’ stands for defibrillator) device, which has the added ability to provide lifesaving therapy to the heart in patients at risk for life-threatening arrhythmias.

While maintaining heart rhythm, your device will store information about your heart. This information can be retrieved by your doctor, who can program your device to provide the best therapy for your condition at routine visits and monitor remotely, using home monitoring.

MEDICATION AND DIET
Usually, having an implantable device does not replace medication. Instead, medication and implantable devices work together, though your doctor may change your dosage, and may recommend dietary changes depending on your overall health.
STARTING YOUR THERAPY

WHAT TO EXPECT FROM SURGERY
Surgery for CRT is done under conscious sedation. You will be given medicine to help you relax, but you will still be aware of your surroundings and able to hear and communicate with your medical team throughout the procedure. You may feel some pressure while the device is being implanted.

During surgery, your doctor might ask you to go through some simple maneuvers, such as taking a deep breath or coughing, to make sure the leads are stable. The doctor will then set the device in place and sew up the incision.

The length of the surgery depends on your type of device, but typically takes several hours, and you may be asked to fast prior to the procedure.

RECOVERY
The typical hospital stay for a CRT patient is only a few days. Use this time to discuss the specifics of any symptoms, especially redness, soreness or tenderness around the implant site, with your physician.

Many people notice a small scar and bump after the incision heals. If appearance is a concern, ask your doctor about locating the device somewhere where it will be less noticeable.

A small percentage of CRT patients will develop complications because of the implant surgery. They may include infection, a reaction to a drug used during surgery or to the device itself and blood loss or damage to a blood vessel, the heart wall or other organs. Be sure to read all literature that comes with your CRT device, and ask your doctor if you have any questions about your therapy.
LIVING WITH CRT

YOUR PATIENT ID CARD
It is important to make sure health care professionals and other personnel are aware that you have an implanted device. We will send you an ID card that you should carry with you at all times. Your ID card will also indicate whether your system will allow you to undergo an MRI scan, and will alert security to the presence of a device that may trigger a metal detector.
If you do not receive a card after your surgery, please contact us at 1 (800) 722-3423 (1-800 PACE ICD).
**PHYSICAL ACTIVITY**
After your surgery, your physician may restrict physical activity during recovery. After recovery, patients are typically able to resume most physical activities. However, contact sports can damage your device or leads. Always check with your doctor concerning the nature of your proposed physical activity.

**DOS AND DON'TS**
Typically, patients with a CRT device are able to resume activities they enjoyed prior to receiving the therapy. While some activities require a bit of extra planning and care, the goal of the therapy is to get you back to the life you want. If you have any questions related to a specific activity or item, ask your doctor or the manufacturer of that specific item.

**SHOCKS**
Shocks are part of living with a CRT-D device. However when you get a shock, it means that the device has responded to a dangerous rhythm, and it might have just saved your life. If you receive a shock, follow up with your doctor, as he or she may want you to have your device checked.

**FOLLOWING UP WITH YOUR DOCTOR**
After your surgery, you will schedule several follow-up visits with your doctor. During these important appointments, your physician will make sure the device is working properly. Sometimes minor, painless adjustments will be done in the office.

If everything is stable, your doctor may only need to see you once or twice a year, or after you have received a shock. During your visit, the doctor or nurse may use a wand to monitor your therapy, or may use data obtained wirelessly. If multiple changes are made at the time of an office visit, your physician may schedule a follow-up to make sure that these changes are working.
CONSTANT MONITORING
Your Abbott CRT device allows for remote monitoring. If you experience a shock or another problem is identified, your device will report that. The device will also report on the status of your battery. Even if being monitored remotely, it is very important that you keep your follow-up appointment schedule with your doctor.

BATTERY LIFE
Most device batteries last five to ten years although it depends on the device and how often it sends electrical impulses to the heart. The device is sealed shut so the battery itself cannot be replaced. Your doctor will likely schedule a shorter surgery using the existing leads placed into a new device.

For more information, please visit www.heartfailureanswers.com.