

Automated Internal Cardioverter-Defibrillator (AICD) Deactivation

People with advanced heart disease may have an automated internal cardioverter-defibrillator (AICD). The AICD is used to prevent death from life-threatening heart rhythms. The AICD provides shocks to the heart to restore normal heart rhythm.

While this treatment is very appropriate for many people, someone with a terminal prognosis may wish to consider having the AICD turned off as end of life approaches. The shocks delivered by an AICD are often painful and having the device turned off when the goal changes from living longer to living better can help keep the person comfortable.

Some AICDs also have a pacemaker. If your loved one chooses to turn off the AICD, the pacemaker is NOT turned off. Only the AICD function (shocking) is turned off; the pacemaker remains ON.

Turning off an AICD is simple and does not require surgery. It can be turned off by using a specialized computer to reprogram the device through the skin.

To deactivate an AICD, contact your Tidewell nurse. The nurse will contact the company that placed the AICD to come to the home and reprogram it.

Now that your loved one is under hospice care, consider:

- Talking with your loved one about their goals for care and about the option to turn off the AICD.
- Explaining the shocks from an AICD are often painful and that as end of life approaches, shocks may occur frequently.
- Explaining to your loved one that turning off the AICD is a simple and painless procedure that takes about 5 minutes.
- Reminding your loved one that the pacemaker (if present) will not be affected and will function as normal.
- Looking for the card and/or materials about the type or brand of AICD that was inserted. These materials are provided to the patient when the AICD is inserted. If you cannot find these materials, contact the cardiologist who inserted the AICD to find out this information.

Call Tidewell or your cardiologist with any questions (855) 843-3935: _____