Remote monitoring article by Adrienne Unsworth November 2023

At the last patient meeting, there were quite a few questions about remote monitoring, so I thought I would write about this.

Almost all of you will have a remote monitor (a monitor). This is part of the care package when you have a device implanted and you are not able to “opt out” of having a remote monitor. Remote monitors allow us to see what your device has been doing since it was last checked, either in clinic or through the monitor.

See how you do with this quiz on remote monitors! Answers are at the bottom, try not to cheat! Stay regular! Adrienne

1. A remote monitor can alter the settings on your device. **TRUE FALSE**
2. A remote monitor should be plugged in at all times. **TRUE FALSE**
3. Remote monitoring replaces a clinic appointment. **TRUE FALSE**
4. Remote monitors should only come with you if you are away from home for more than 1 week. **TRUE FALSE**
5. Remote monitors must have a wireless connection to send a download.  **TRUE FALSE**
6. Some of the device companies now have an application (APP) instead of a remote monitor machine. **TRUE FALSE**
7. Anyone can have the APP instead of the remote monitor machine. **TRUE FALSE**
8. Having the APP is more convenient for some people. **TRUE FALSE**
9. The APP is compatible with all mobile phones. **TRUE FALSE**
10. The APP can receive messages from the hospital about your download. **TRUE FALSE**

Answers

1. **FALSE** – remote monitors cannot alter any settings on your device. They can only gather information about your devices activity and send it to the website which the hospital has access to. Patients do not have access to the website. Only trained hospital staff can change the settings on your device with the device interrogator (you will have seen these when you come to clinic to have your device checked).
2. **TRUE** – we recommend you keep your remote monitor plugged in, in the room where you sleep, all the time. This is so the monitor can have a quick look at your device every night and perform the scheduled downloads we have arranged. It also means if you have a shock, you may be stressed or emotional, and your monitor is all ready to do a download straight away.
3. **TRUE** – some, but not all patients, can have a remote monitor download instead of coming to clinic to have their device checked. We decide which patients are suitable for remote downloads, but all patients should come to clinic once a year at least, to have their device checked.
4. **FALSE** – remote monitors should come with you if you are continuously away from home for 1 month or more. So, if you go away for 1 week, you can choose to keep your monitor at home if you wish. Remember, if you are away from home for a period of time, make sure you know where the nearest hospital is. Chances are, you will be completely fine, but just in case you do get a shock, you have the address of the local hospital if you need to attend.
5. **TRUE** – most of the newer monitors now use wireless technology to send a download. Technology is developing all the time and wireless remote monitoring was the most advanced development until recently.
6. **TRUE** – two of the device companies (Medtronic and Abbott St Jude), have developed an APP for their devices. These are very new to the market and are a great advancement on the available technology we use now. One of the biggest advantages is that the monitor is on your mobile phone, so it is easily accessible and can come with you whenever you have your mobile.
7. **FALSE** - not everyone will be able to have the APP. We can discuss this with you when you come to clinic for a device check if you wish. Ask your cardiac Physiologist at your device check. Not all mobile phones are compatible with the APP, you may not be able to navigate the computer skills needed to set up and use the APP. There are several other factors to take into consideration also.
8. **TRUE** – many people using the APP have found it more convenient having the APP on their mobile. Most people have their mobile with them, or at least close by, all the time. They like the fact that there is no machine sitting in the bedroom, flashing away at night or when the monitor is performing a download!
9. **FALSE** – not all mobile phones are compatible with the APP. At the time of writing this article, Medtronic APP is compatible with most of the newer Apple and Samsung phones. As the technology develops and improves, it may be possible for all mobile phones to be compatible. The APP is compatible with the iPad and Samsung tablet also. A lot of people find using the APP on a tablet is easier because the size of the screen is bigger and easier to read.
10. **TRUE** – the APP can receive messages from the hospital, which you can read. Messages will state your download was received and no further action is needed, or alternatively, your download was received, please call us at the hospital.