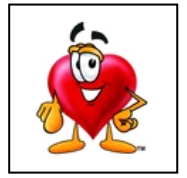




HEART FAILURE PATIENT INFORMATION LEAFLET



Q. What is Heart Failure?

Heart failure is a common condition which results in the heart being less efficient at pumping blood around the body. Although not completely curable, there is very effective treatment available.

Q. How common is Heart Failure?

There are around 68,000 new cases of heart failure diagnosed in the UK each year. It becomes more common with increasing age about 1 in 15 of people aged 75 – 84 and just over 1 in 7 people aged 85 and above have heart failure .It is uncommon in younger people.

Q. What are the symptoms of Heart failure

- ✓ shortness of breath – especially on exertion or when lying flat in bed
- ✓ waking up breathless at night
- ✓ weakness / tiredness
- ✓ Swollen feet, ankles, sometimes legs and abdomen

Q. What causes heart failure?

Heart failure can be caused by a number of things including

- Heart attacks in the past
- Coronary heart disease
- Narrow or leaking heart valves
- Hypertension
- Viral heart infection
- Excessive alcohol intake
- Heart rhythm problems
- Heart muscle disease, such as cardiomyopathy

Q. What can I expect from the Practice?

You will be invited by letter for an annual heart failure review with the practice nurse

You will have an initial appointment with the nurse assistant, this will take 10 mins for blood tests, to check your kidney function , other bloods which may be taken are cholesterol (fat in blood) liver function bloods and you may have bloods to check for anaemia or thyroid problems, this is usually a week or two before your clinic appointment

At the clinic you will see the practice nurse this appointment will last approximately 20 mins,

- We will discuss your blood results
- We will ask you about your medication
- We will ask you about any symptoms of heart failure you may have
- We will check your pulse, blood pressure and we will weigh you
- We will ask about your smoking status etc and discuss general healthy lifestyle choices

Q. What can I do?

A few simple lifestyle changes can make a big difference to how you will feel

Daily Weights

May be advised for some patients weigh yourself each morning after going to the toilet and before getting dressed or having breakfast. Keep a daily record. This can indicate if you are retaining too much fluid. Report an increase of 2lbs 2 days running or 3 to 4lbs in 1 week to your GP

Use Less Salt

As salt can cause water retention, Avoid food high in salt i.e canned foods, cheeses and processed meats and do not add salt at the table . DO NOT use salt alternatives as the contain potassium which may be detrimental to your health. Use herbs and spices to add colour and flavour.

Drink Less Alcohol

Alcohol can worsen heart failure stick to recommended levels

Get Some Exercise

Exercise regularly within limitation. Set yourself small goals and take it gently.

Stop Smoking

Smoking harms the heart and lungs

Lose Weight

Being overweight means the heart has to work harder, a few small changes can be made gradually. Eat a low fat varied healthy diet

Get Immunised

It is recommended to have an annual Flu vaccination and a one off pneumonia jab to give yourself protection against infection

****REMEMBER THESE BASIC POINTS ****

- Take your medication regularly as prescribed. NEVER stop taking your tablets unless told to by your GP.
- Make sure you do not run out of tablets
- Eat a healthy , balanced diet
- Report any sudden weight changes 2 lbs gain 2 days running or 3 to 4lbs in 1 week report to your GP
- Report any increase in breathlessness
- Report any increase in swelling of your ankles



Q. where can I find more information

Feel free to ask your GP or nurse if you have any questions

There are also some helpful websites

British Heart Foundation
Greater London House
180 Hampstead Rd
LONDON NW1 7AW
TEL (Heart Help Line) 0300 330 3311

Web: www.bhf.org.uk

HEART UK
7 North road
Maidenhead
Berkshire SL6 1PE



TEL (Helpline) 0845 450 5988

Web www.Heartuk.org.uk

PRACTICE CONTACT DETAILS

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