



University Hospitals Bristol **NHS**  
NHS Foundation Trust

Patient information service  
**Bristol Heart Institute**

# Information for heart failure patients



Respecting everyone  
Embracing change  
Recognising success  
Working together  
**Our hospitals.**

  
**Above+Beyond** ★  
For Patients. For Health. For Bristol.

This leaflet provides additional information to the British Heart Foundation leaflet, 'Living with Heart Failure.'

## **Philosophy of the heart failure service**

To provide high quality care, support and information to patients with heart failure, their families and carers.

## **Aims of the service**

Heart failure is a life-long chronic condition that may at times make you feel very unwell. The aim of our service is to ensure that you receive the best treatment possible and, with careful monitoring and support, to improve how you feel on a day to day basis and maximise your quality of life.

We also aim to prevent you from being admitted to hospital unnecessarily. Many patients with heart failure will need to come to hospital occasionally for review and possible changes in treatment. We will do our best to ensure that any hospital admissions are appropriate and timely, rather than unplanned emergencies.

## **The heart failure team**

The team comprises of two heart failure consultants, Dr Angus Nightingale and Dr Yasmin Ismail, and heart failure specialist nurses. If you are seen by a heart failure nurse or consultant during your stay in hospital, you may be referred to a community heart failure nurse on discharge. They will see you at one of the heart failure clinics that are held across the city and in North Somerset.

## The heart failure specialist nurse

The heart failure specialist nurse is an experienced nurse with advanced clinical skills in heart failure management.

Her role is to:

- provide you and your family or carers with verbal and written information about your condition and the ways in which it can be managed and to ensure that you understand the treatment that is offered to you
- to monitor your progress in hospital and provide follow-up support after you are discharged home
- to assist your doctors in monitoring your condition in the outpatient clinics or at home
- to communicate with your GP and cardiologist and ensure that all of the relevant professionals involved in your care are kept up to date regarding your condition and treatment
- to make referrals to other healthcare professionals or supportive services as appropriate.

## Self assessment - is my heart failure worsening?

With time, people with heart failure usually learn to recognise the signs and symptoms that may indicate that it is getting worse. However, the checklist below may help if you are unsure what to look out for:

- has my weight increased or decreased suddenly (by 1kg or 2lb per day for two or three consecutive days?
- am I more short of breath than usual?

- do I have a new cough, with or without phlegm or sputum?
- am I waking at night due to breathlessness?
- do I need more pillows than usual to help my breathing?
- are my feet and legs more swollen than usual?
- do my shoes or clothes feel tighter than usual?
- am I finding it more difficult to do my usual amount of exercise or activity?
- have I felt dizzy, faint, or experienced blackouts?
- have I felt a racing heart, slow heart, missed beats or palpitations?
- am I experiencing chest discomfort that is new, or is my angina worse than usual?

## **Advice if you are on medication to help your heart**

If you are unwell with prolonged or significant diarrhoea or vomiting (over 12 to 24 hours) or you are unwell and can't drink fluids, you may need to stop the following heart tablets for the period of your illness:

**ACE inhibitors:** ramipril; lisinopril; captopril; perindopril

**Angiotensin II receptor blockers:** losartan; candesartan; irbesartan; telmestartan; valsartan

**Neprilysin inhibitors/angiotensin receptor blockers:** Entresto

**Aldosterone antagonists:** spironolactone; eplerenone

**Loop diuretics:** furosemide; bumetanide

**Thiazidediuretics:** metolazone; bendroflumethiazide

It is important to seek prompt medical advice in these circumstances, especially if you are becoming dehydrated. The tablets can be re-started as soon as you can drink normally again.

## **Blood monitoring after starting heart failure tablets**

Some tablets that are commonly used to treat heart failure can occasionally have an adverse effect on kidney function. If you are started on these tablets, you will need to have regular blood tests. Your heart failure nurse will write here when blood tests are due:

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## **Contacting the heart failure team**

We are very happy to receive calls if you are concerned about your condition.

Hours of service are Monday to Friday, 8am to 5pm.

Telephone no: 0117 342 6602 or 0117 342 6696 – an answerphone is available on these numbers, so please leave a message, stating your full name, your BRI hospital number or NHS number and telephone number. One of the heart failure nurses will call you back as soon as possible.

If your call is urgent and the heart failure nurse does not answer when you call, please ring the BRI main switchboard who will contact the nurse via a bleep, or ring your GP or 999.

Bristol Royal Infirmary switchboard: 0117 923 0000. Bleep number 3687 or 3503.

## **Community heart failure nurses:**

Bristol Heart Failure Team – Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm.  
Tel 0117 908 2315

North Somerset Heart Failure Team – Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm. Tel 01275 371496

## **Useful Contacts:**

Stop Smoking Bristol – [www.smokefreebristol.com](http://www.smokefreebristol.com)  
Tel 0117 922 2255

British Heart Foundation – [www.bhf.org.uk](http://www.bhf.org.uk)

Tel 0300 330 3322

Pumping Marvellous – [www.pumpingmarvellous.org](http://www.pumpingmarvellous.org)

Tel 0800 978 8133

Cardiomyopathy UK – [www.cardiomyopathy.org](http://www.cardiomyopathy.org)

Tel 01494 791224

UH Bristol – [www.uhbristol.nhs.uk](http://www.uhbristol.nhs.uk)

Tel 0117 923 0000

## Notes / queries



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As well as providing clinical care, our Trust has an important role in research. This allows us to discover new and improved ways of treating patients.

While under our care, you may be invited to take part in research. To find out more please visit:  
**[www.uhbristol.nhs.uk/research-innovation](http://www.uhbristol.nhs.uk/research-innovation)**  
or call the research and innovation team on  
**0117 342 0233.**

For access to other patient leaflets and information please go to the following address:

**[www.uhbristol.nhs.uk/patients-and-visitors/information-for-patients/](http://www.uhbristol.nhs.uk/patients-and-visitors/information-for-patients/)**



**Hospital switchboard: 0117 923 0000**



**Minicom: 0117 934 9869**



**[www.uhbristol.nhs.uk](http://www.uhbristol.nhs.uk)**



For an interpreter or signer please contact the telephone number on your appointment letter.



For this leaflet in large print, audio, or PDF format, please email [patientleaflets@uhbristol.nhs.uk](mailto:patientleaflets@uhbristol.nhs.uk)

