

PATIENT INFORMATION

THE HEART FAILURE NURSE SERVICE



The Heart Failure Nurse Service

You have been seen by the Heart Failure Nurse in hospital because a test has shown that your heart is not functioning as well as it could. Heart failure can be caused by many different conditions. Symptoms include fluid retention, causing breathlessness, swollen ankles and legs and tiredness. Medication can usually ease symptoms and can often improve the outlook.

Some Top Tips

- Weigh yourself daily at the same time (preferably in the morning after passing urine and before breakfast) wearing minimal clothing and write weights down.
- Aim to drink no more than 2 litres (3 – 4 pints) per day unless you have been told otherwise. This includes all hot and cold drinks.
- Avoid salt in your diet where possible.
- Do not stop taking your medications unless discussed with a doctor or nurse.
- For most people with heart failure, regular low-intensity exercise is advised. The level of exercise to aim for will vary from person to person. Before you start to increase your exercise, get advice from a specialist.

People with heart failure, sometimes have days when they are not feeling so well. If you notice any of the following symptoms they may be related to your heart condition.

In the last few days have you noticed?

- A sudden increase in weight by 3-4lbs (2kgs) or more in 2-3 days.
- Increased shortness of breath at rest, or when active.
- That you need an extra pillow to prop you up to help your breathing.
- Waking up short of breath at night.
- New or increased swelling/heaviness in the ankles, legs or tummy.
- General increase in tiredness, feeling less capable.

If you answer yes to any of the above, please contact your GP or the out of hour's service for a review. If you experience chest pain, sudden severe shortness of breath or palpitations which do not settle with rest, call 999 and ask for an ambulance.

If your symptoms or condition worsens, or if you are concerned about anything, please call your GP, 111, or 999.

Patient Experience

We know that being admitted to hospital can be a difficult and unsettling time for you and your loved ones. If you have any questions or concerns, please do speak with a member of staff on the ward or in the relevant department who will do their best to answer your questions and reassure you.

Feedback

Feedback is really important and useful to us – it can tell us where we are working well and where improvements can be made. There are lots of ways you can share your experience with us including completing our Friends and Family Test – cards are available and can be posted on all wards, departments and clinics at our hospitals. We value your comments and feedback and thank you for taking the time to share this with us.

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

If you have any concerns or questions about your care, we advise you to talk with the nurse in charge or the department manager in the first instance as they are best placed to answer any questions or resolve concerns quickly. If the relevant member of staff is unable to help resolve your concern, you can contact the PALS Team. We offer informal help, advice or support about any aspect of hospital services & experiences.

Our PALS team will liaise with the various departments in our hospitals on your behalf, if you feel unable to do so, to resolve your problems and where appropriate refer to outside help.

If you are still unhappy you can contact the Complaints Department, who can investigate your concerns. You can make a complaint orally, electronically or in writing and we can advise and guide you through the complaints procedure.

How to contact PALS:

Telephone Patient Services: 0300 123 1732 or via email at: wah-tr.PALS@nhs.net

Opening times:

The PALS telephone lines are open Monday to Friday from 8.30am to 4.00pm. Please be aware that you may need to leave a voicemail message, but we aim to return your call within one working day.

If you are unable to understand this leaflet, please communicate with a member of staff.