

Heart Failure Service

Who are we?

We are a team of professionals with extensive experience and specialised cardiac skills. We aim to diagnose and help look after people with heart failure. The Heart Failure team consists of:

- Consultant Cardiologists
- Heart Failure Specialist Nurses (hospital based)
- Heart Failure Specialist Nurses (community based)
- Palliative Care Consultants and Specialist Nurses, Hospicecare
- Cardiac Rehabilitation Specialist Nurses
- Pharmacist and Occupational Therapist (hospital based)

What is Heart Failure?

'Heart Failure' is the term we use to describe a set of symptoms that occur when your heart fails to deliver as much blood and oxygen around your body as it should.

Heart Failure can be caused by a number of problems, for example; heart attacks, high blood pressure, infection, rhythm or heart valve problems and sometimes it is unknown.

The main symptoms of heart failure are:

- Shortness of breath.
- Swelling of ankles, feet or abdomen.
- Fatigue.

Aim of the Service

Our goal is to help optimise the treatment for your heart, help you manage your symptoms in order to improve your quality of life, and prevent avoidable admissions to hospital. The team offers high quality patient care, respecting individual wishes, beliefs and needs.

The team will:

- Work closely with you and your carer/family, your GP and your Consultant and other members of the multi-disciplinary team.
- Plan your care with you to meet your individual needs.
- Offer support and individualised advice for you and your family.
- Discuss and review your heart failure medication and adjust your doses if necessary.
- Monitor your condition and blood test results as required.
- Refer you to other services where appropriate.
- Offer a personalised exercise based cardiac rehabilitation program.

How can you help?

Medication: Always bring all medication to your appointments. We will review your symptoms and discuss your heart failure medication with you. We will adjust your medication, if necessary, to achieve the target doses to improve your long term outlook.

Lifestyle Changes: We can offer advice on the following: healthy eating, medicine information, exercise, rest and sleep, worry and anxiety and stopping smoking.

Self-Management: Understanding your condition and being in control of your symptoms and enable you to feel more in charge. We will give advice on how to recognise worsening symptoms and who to contact.

- Please **weigh yourself each morning** to help detect early changes in fluid retention.
- Remember to take all your **medication as prescribed**.

Worsening Symptoms Advice

Telephone us if you notice the following changes, as your medication may need adjusting:

- Weight: increase or decrease by 2 pounds (about 1kg) a day for 2 days or more.
- Increased swelling in legs or tummy.
- Increase shortness of breath.
- Thirst increase.
- Light-headedness.
- Dizziness.
- Appetite change.

When you are unwell with any of the following:

- Vomiting or diarrhoea (unless only minor).
- Dehydration e.g. from fevers and sweats.

Then please seek advice as your medications may need to be temporarily adjusted.

Service Contact Details

You can contact us during office hours, Monday to Friday 9am - 5pm.

Hospital-based Heart Failure Nurses: **01392 403818**

Community Heart Failure Nurses: **01392 356159**

There is an answer machine when we are away from the office. Please leave a short message and your contact number and we will try to return your call on the same/next working day.

If you call with an urgent problem and get through to the answer machine, please contact your GP or out of hours service.

Urgent, but not life-threatening problems - telephone **111**

Emergencies - telephone **999**

Alternatively you can contact the service by email:

Hospital-based Heart Failure Nurses:
rde-tr.heartfailure@nhs.net

Community Heart Failure Nurses:
rde-tr.communitycardiacservice@nhs.net

Useful Links

British Heart Foundation (BHF)
Telephone: **020 7935 0185**
Website: **www.bhf.org.uk**
Heart Information Line: **08450 70 80 70**

Cardiomyopathy Association
Telephone: **01923 249977**
Website: **www.cardiomyopathy.org**

Pumping Marvellous
Telephone: **0800 978 8133**
Website: **www.pumpingmarvellous.org**

PALS

The Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) ensures that the NHS listens to patients, relatives, carers and friends, answers questions and resolves concerns as quickly as possible. If you have a query or concern call **01392 402093** or email **rde-tr.PALS@nhs.net**.

The Trust cannot accept any responsibility for the accuracy of the information given if the leaflet is not used by RD&E staff undertaking procedures at the RD&E hospitals.

© Royal Devon and Exeter NHS Foundation Trust

Designed by Graphics (Print & Design), RD&E