

# Patient information

## Heart failure outpatient service

Patient sticker

**Appointment date:**.....

Your doctor has diagnosed you with heart failure. This means that your heart, as a pump, is not working at 100 percent.

Patients with heart failure who have recently left hospital need a 'check up' after leaving hospital to make sure the treatment given is working. This appointment will be between 2-4 weeks after discharge depending on how stable your condition is. This follow-up appointment will be with a Heart Failure Nurse Specialist who works alongside the Cardiology consultants.

The heart failure clinic is a way of managing and optimising your heart failure treatment which includes lifestyle and medication therapy, both are important in terms of improving the quality of life and the prognosis.

The heart failure nurse role is a supportive and educational one to assist you and your family in understanding and managing the nature of heart failure. If it suits you, please prepare a list of questions that you wish to have answered; and keep a record of any symptoms you may experience. These can be discussed on the day of your appointment. Symptoms may include an increase in shortness of breath, palpitations, chest pain and dizziness.

Your appointment will take 20-30 minutes, during this time you will see the heart failure specialist nurse who will obtain a history and examination, investigations such as electrocardiograph (ECG), blood tests and chest x-ray may be requested on the

day. A letter will be sent to your GP after the clinic appointment detailing any changes to medication, your individual management plan and the results of any relevant investigations, all of which will be explained before you leave.

If you do not receive a letter confirming an expected appointment please phone the Heart Failure Nurse Specialist office on 01284 712837, if there is no answer please leave a message on the answerphone with your name, contact details and expected time of appointment. Your call will be returned as soon as someone is available.

After leaving hospital please consider the following points:

- Please take the medicines you have been discharged home with accurately. Managing your medicines will help you manage your symptoms better, which could help you to breathe better, have more energy, to increase your activity levels and reduce fluid retention.
- 'Weight watching': Weigh yourself every morning after you get up before you have breakfast or anything to drink. Keep a record; if your weight increases by 2-3 pounds over 3 days, or you develop other symptoms, you should contact your Heart Failure nurse or GP. You may have been advised to restrict your fluid intake to a set amount; this can help to alleviate your symptoms. Please keep an eye on your fluid intake and follow the advice given on discharge.
- Vaccinations for 'flu and pneumonia are recommended for individuals with heart failure, so please contact your GP if you haven't had either.
- Diet and Alcohol: Eat a well balanced diet, cut down on saturated fats and eat at least 5 portions of fruit or vegetables a day. Cut out salt as it can cause water retention. Avoid food high in sodium (salt) such as ready prepared meals. You should not exceed the recommended amount of alcohol as this can be harmful to your heart muscle. It is recommended that if you drink alcohol to remain within the maximum recommended limit of 14 units per week and to have at least 2 alcohol free days per week.

**For further information please contact:**

Heart Failure Specialist Nurse on 01284 712837

DATE	WEIGHT	SYMPTOMS

*If you would like any information regarding access to the West Suffolk Hospital and its facilities please visit the hospital website [www.wsh.nhs.uk](http://www.wsh.nhs.uk) and click on the link, or visit the disabledgo website:*

<http://www.disabledgo.com/organisations/west-suffolk-nhs-foundation-trust/main>