

# Spotlight On...

## Heart Health

ISSUE 4: 03/08/21



Throughout July, we have been shining a spotlight on our Cardiology Services. We've looked at how to keep the heart healthy, different heart problems and conditions, the expert diagnostic procedures available and the importance of knowing life-saving CPR skills.

We've rounded up all the information from throughout the month below...

### 'Food for thought'- keeping your heart healthy *by Consultant Cardiologist, Dr Freya Lodge*



"It's surprisingly difficult to find reliable resources when it comes to advice about keeping your heart healthy, mainly because there are so many common misconceptions about what constitutes 'healthy'. For example, something like tracking your nutrition intake periodically doesn't sound like bad advice, but I'm not convinced it's healthy. We're beyond the era of thinking that calorie counting is necessary and we are also increasingly aware that different foods are metabolised in different ways. Much of the work humans do to process foods has the effect of making the calories more available to us - by being able to gain increased nutrition from grains, for example. However, in modern life, we have taken this to extremes with our consumption of simple carbohydrates and sugars.

Another very important factor in staying healthy is to get enough sleep. I often ask about this in clinic – lack of sleep disrupts appetite through release of a number of hormones, including cortisol; the stress hormones. This leads many people to crave high energy foods to counter their tiredness.

Also, staying active and exercising tends to promote healthier cravings than leading a sedentary lifestyle, and counter-intuitively often makes people feel less tired and sluggish.

Final thought: our modern diet has normalised the consumption of sweet and salty foods, but we have not evolved to consume food in this way – the energy in our food was previously harder to access and extracted lower down in our guts. A high sugar/starch diet extracts the energy higher up, from our stomachs. When we look at sweet and salty foods, we often think of them as a 'treat', where in fact these foods induce a rapid sugar hit that stimulates insulin release and makes us feel tired and hungry an hour or so later."

Dr Lodge explains more about keeping the heart healthy in this video:  
<https://youtu.be/d4xqV3Ysa0A>



### How old is your heart?

Take the test to find out...

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Each day, your heart beats around 100,000 times. This continuously pumps about five litres (eight pints) of blood around your body through a network of blood vessels. This blood delivers oxygen and nutrients to all parts of your body, and carries away unwanted carbon dioxide and waste products.

Smoking, being overweight, having a poor diet and not exercising can all have a huge impact on the health of your heart.

To find out the age of your heart compared to your real age, take the The Heart Age Test at <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/nhs-health-check/check-your-heart-age-tool/>



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## Do you know the difference between a cardiac arrest and a heart attack? Could you save a life?



A cardiac arrest and heart attack are not the same.

A cardiac arrest is an electrical problem. The person will be unconscious - call 999 immediately / start CPR.

A heart attack is a circulation problem. The person will probably be conscious - call 999 / keep them calm.

This video explains the difference between a cardiac arrest and heart attack in more detail

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rXLeAGDW-Y8>

A sudden cardiac arrest can happen to anyone, at any age. Every year in Wales, over 6,000 people will have a sudden cardiac arrest in the community and approximately 80% of those will happen in the home.

If a sudden cardiac arrest occurs to your loved one at home – their only chance of survival could be YOU.

CPR and defibrillation can treble their chance of survival. Starting immediate CPR is vital as it keeps blood and oxygen circulating to the brain and around the body. A defibrillator will then deliver a controlled electric shock to try and get the heart beating normally again.

If you're with someone who's having a cardiac arrest, call 999, start CPR and use a defibrillator if there's one nearby. Follow instructions from the 999 operator, until emergency services take over.

Public access defibrillators are often in locations like train stations and shopping centres. Anyone can use one and you don't need training to do so.

Take a few minutes to learn or refresh your CPR skills - they could be some of the most important minutes you can spend, which could help you save a life  
<https://gov.wales/save-a-life-cymru>



There are many different heart conditions.

You should speak to your GP about your symptoms if:

- your palpitations last a long time, don't improve or get worse
- you have a history of heart problems
- you're concerned about the palpitations

We know it can be overwhelming if you're diagnosed with a heart condition. Sharing stories and talking to others going through something similar can help.

## In the Spotlight

Our Heart Health Spotlight stars include:



Linda  
**CONSULTANT NURSE**



Freya  
**CARDIAC CONSULTANT**



Angela  
**CONSULTANT NURSE**



Philip  
**CLINICAL DIRECTOR FOR CARDIOLOGY**



Chris  
**EXERCISE REFERRAL COORDINATOR**

You can view their profiles at  
<https://abuhs.nhs.wales/clinical-futures/spotlight-on/heart-health/>



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## Cardiac MRI Scans



Did you know that an MRI scanner can be used to scan the heart?

A Cardiac MRI (Magnetic Resonance Imaging) Scan is a diagnostic test that aims to obtain detailed information about the heart, without using radiation. It's deemed one of the best investigations for looking at the

tissue, structure, texture, size and volume of the heart in great detail, as well as being able to detect any swelling or inflammation.

As the Health Board were previously unable to offer this service internally, patients requiring this procedure often travelled to Bristol for their Cardiac MRI Scans. Now, the Health Board utilises existing equipment and staff members, but uses them in a different way in order to conduct in-house Cardiac MRI scans.

The scan can determine whether a patient has suffered a heart attack, as well as diagnosing other issues with the heart, which allows patients to receive more information about their condition and receive expert diagnostics closer to their home.

This video explains more: <https://youtu.be/4II0tLUQ94Y>

## Pacemakers



A pacemaker is a small device that's placed under the skin in your chest to help control your heart-beat.

Did you know, the world's very first pacemaker was fitted in 1959, and that patient is still alive? Before pacemakers, patients with heart conditions would die within a year. Pacemakers can now restore life expectancy to near normal levels.

Cardiologist, Dr Philip Campbell, has a special interest in Pacemakers and is currently leading plans to offer an expanded service for advanced

pacemakers at The Grange University Hospital.

This will reduce waiting times, as it will allow patients to be treated locally, rather than having to go to Cardiff. The Grange University Hospital Cardiologists are also the only team in Wales that provide a regular Saturday morning angioplasty list.



## The Heart Failure Service

The Nurse led Heart Failure (HF) Service is headed by a Nurse Consultant.

The team help patients fully understand their HF diagnosis, so they are able to manage their symptoms on a daily basis. They also ensure patients are given evidence-based medication in a timely manner to improve symptoms and maintain quality of life.

The team are really passionate about putting their patients at the heart of everything they do, by offering bespoke appointments in the form of face-to-face clinics, telephone consultations and virtual clinics, so that patients can receive their care as close to home as possible.



"I attend the Heart Failure Clinic at County Hospital once a month. It's easy to get to as it's located less than a mile from where I live. At the clinic they take regular blood samples and check my medication. Karen makes sure I'm well looked after.

The clinics are very reassuring as you have people monitoring you, so it stops some of the worry.

I'm really happy to go there. It's better than having to go back into hospital".

Phil



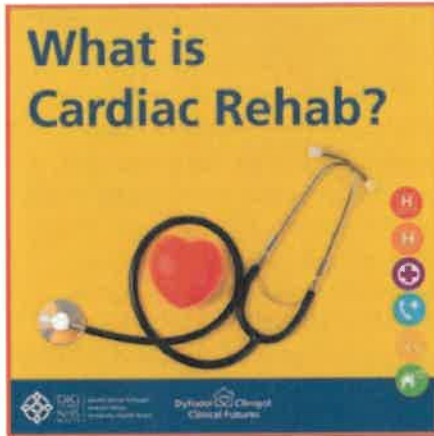


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## The Cardiac Rehabilitation Service



The Cardiac Rehabilitation Service is an essential service within the Health Board, which helps patients recover from their recent cardiac event/diagnosis, such as heart attacks, angina, stent insertion, bypass or valve surgery. The service also provide holistic care for patients, their families or care givers via a comprehensive, multi-disciplinary, collaborative health-care team.

The Cardiac Rehab programme combines education, exercise and risk factor management, all aimed at increasing

the health and well-being of Cardiology patients and empowering them to know what's normal, what's not normal and what they should and shouldn't be doing. The main aim of the programme is to restore their patients' confidence following their ordeal.

There are four Cardiac Rehab Centres located across our Health Board, where patients are able to choose which centre they would like to attend, so that they can receive their care as close to home as possible.

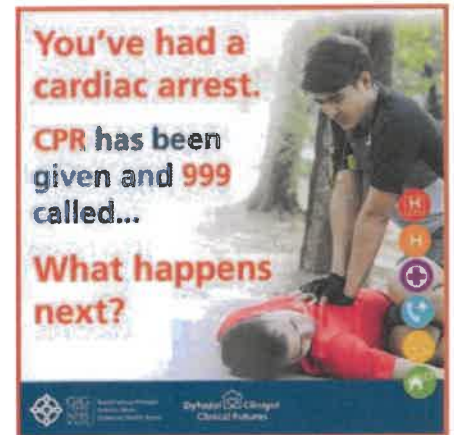
Read more about Cardiac Rehab and the different roles within the team  
<https://abuhb.nhs.wales/clinical-futures/spotlight-on/heart-health/>

## Holly's Cardiac Rehab Journey

When she was just 33, fit and healthy Holly was diagnosed with a very rare form of heart failure, thought to be caused by pregnancy. She was in complete shock, terrified that she'd leave her baby daughter without a mother and her husband without a wife.

Thankfully, her positive attitude and determination made sure she never gave up the fight, and she is now living a virtually normal life after taking part in the Health Board's comprehensive Cardiac Rehabilitation Programme, which has allowed her to accomplish goals that she never thought possible.

Read her story:  
<https://abuhb.nhs.wales/clinical-futures/spotlight-on/heart-health/>



In the Emergency Department, you rarely get to see what's happening behind closed doors. Behind the scenes, staff are working to save lives. Patients with life-threatening emergencies are brought directly by ambulance or helicopter and taken straight into Resus. They must take priority and need to be treated immediately - every minute counts.



You can follow the journey a patient will take following a cardiology emergency at  
<https://abuhb.nhs.wales/clinical-futures/spotlight-on/heart-health/>



[abuhb.nhs.wales](https://abuhb.nhs.wales)