



YOUR INFORMATION

Chemotherapy

CHEMOTHERAPY

Your diagnosis

You have been given a diagnosis of heart failure, which usually means your heart is working inefficiently. This inefficiency is usually due to two main causes: firstly, the incapacity of the heart to pump correctly and secondly, its inability to relax sufficiently to fill up with blood. There is generally an underlying problem which has caused this inefficiency. Occasionally, we don't know the exact cause of why your heart is working inefficiently (clinicians call this idiopathic). The question most patients want answering is "Why is my heart not working efficiently; what has gone wrong?"

We believe that the cause of your heart failure is due to a reaction to **chemotherapy**.

You will have had treatment for cancer, or are in the process of being treated for cancer. You have now been told that your heart efficiency has been affected as a result of the treatment you have been receiving. There are only a small number of cancer treatments that do affect your heart; these tend to be anthracyclines. The dose of the treatment given and your susceptibility to having a reaction to the drugs, that will have a bearing on any associated problems with your heart. Some people will have a higher risk of having a reaction to this form of chemotherapy, in particular the elderly, children and those who have had heart problems previously. If your heart has been affected by this form of treatment, it may be a number of years before a problem is identified. You will have had scans of your heart before, during or after this particular form of chemotherapy. This is to ascertain if the treatment is likely to, or has already had, any effect upon your heart. If you require further chemotherapy, this may have a detrimental effect on your heart. Therefore, your Doctor will discuss with you alternative therapies.

What is the outlook in terms of my heart failure?

The cardiology team will commence you on a range of medication in order to support your heart to function more efficiently. If you are to remain on chemotherapy, your Doctor will discuss alternative therapies with you. It is hoped that by discontinuing the form of chemotherapy which has caused the problem, no further.



Contact Pumping Marvellous



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heartfailureaware (open)



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helpforhearts (closed support group)

Review date September 2019