



YOUR INFORMATION

Myocardial Infarction

MYOCARDIAL INFARCTION

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 you having had a **heart attack**.

What is a heart attack?

You may have heard it called so many things: heart attack, myocardial infarction or MI, coronary thrombosis. These terms all mean the same thing. Fine arteries supply blood containing the oxygen and nutrients that you need to the muscle (myocardium) layer of your heart. These arteries are called the coronary arteries. Fatty plaques resulting from cholesterol can form in the arteries and during a heart attack, the plaque ruptures causing a clot to form in one of the coronary arteries. As a result, blood is prevented from flowing through the artery. This consequently damages that part of the muscle of the heart receiving blood.

Why have I had a heart attack?

You have also been given the section of the guide in relation to coronary heart disease. If not, please ask your clinician. There will be a number of risk factors which usually result in a person having a heart attack. Do ask your clinician to explain which risk factors you have been exposed to.

How do you know that this is the reason why my heart is failing to do its job efficiently?

You will have undergone a large number of tests and investigations. One of the investigations that you will have had is an echocardiogram or echo. This shows how effectively your heart is pumping and if your heart muscle has been damaged as a result of your heart attack. You will have further echos to assess if there is permanent damage to your heart muscle which has resulted in your heart failing to pump efficiently.

What is the treatment I will receive for this underlying cause of my heart failure?

You may have been admitted as an emergency and taken to the cardiac catheter laboratory when you had your heart attack. During this, a Cardiologist will have undertaken 'primary angioplasty'. A dye will have been used to show on an X-ray machine where a blockage has occurred. A stent will then be fed through into the blocked artery, keeping it open. In visual terms, a stent looks like a metal mesh of scaffolding. If this has not occurred, you may have been given a clot busting drug (thrombolysis) through a drip in order to break down the clot.

You will be given a number of drugs (including Statins) in order to control cholesterol levels. This is in order to thin the blood, ensuring it is not too sticky. This enables your blood to flow effectively through the coronary arteries, supporting your heart to pump more efficiently (see the medication section of the guide).

You will also be given advice on addressing the risk factors that may have resulted in your heart attack.



Contact Pumping Marvellous



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helpforhearts (closed support group)

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