



Useful tips for the Adult Congenital Heart Disease Patient (ACHD)

- Ensure you attend your outpatient appointment either 6 monthly, annually, every 18 months or 2 years as directed by the team. It is important we monitor you and your heart health.
- When attending clinic come prepared for a little wait. At your appointment, we will perform a variety of checks. You will need to have your blood pressure, heart rate, oxygen saturations and weight recorded. We may need to check an ECG and ECHO. These tests provide the detailed information we need before you see the congenital consultant or nurse specialist.
- Always bring a medication list to your clinic appointment, this makes it easier for you to remember and means we can spell the drugs correctly!
- Take all tablets/medications prescribed by the congenital consultant, if you think you need to stop for any reason please discuss with your ACHD nurse specialist team first.
- It is very important to maintain good hydration for your heart and your kidney function – make sure you drink plenty of water. If you are on a fluid restriction, ensure you stick to this limit each day.
- If you take the blood thinner Warfarin, be mindful of how much alcohol you drink. Excessive alcohol can alter your INR readings. If you become unwell, your reading may also be affected. Let us know if you are having issues with your readings.
- It is important that you get your flu vaccination each year, and your covid-19 vaccine when offered (unless you have been advised medically not to have it). We also recommend the one off pneumonia vaccine.
- Make sure you keep as active as you can. Exercise is an important part of keeping you well, a short walk each day if you are able is a good way to boost your energy levels and support your mental health. Not everyone has to attend a gym or exercise class to stay active. If you are worried, please discuss your exercise limitation with your congenital team.

- Dental care is a definite must! Make sure you attend every 6 months and maintain good dental hygiene in the meantime to reduce the risk of endocarditis.
- For our female patients, we can advise you regarding options for contraception. If you are considering becoming pregnant, discuss this with the team in our combined obstetric clinic each month. Ask your ACHD nurse specialist for more information.
- It is a good idea to carry contact details of your congenital team on you at all times in case of emergency. It might also be useful to have a copy of your last clinic letter so you can show other health professionals your congenital details and tablets you take. This will help with prompt and appropriate management of your care.

Remember we are here for you Monday – Friday from 8am-5pm. If you do not get an answer, please leave us a message and we will aim to call you back within 24hrs.

Adult Congenital Nurse Specialist Team Freeman Hospital

Lorna Carruthers 0191 2448139

l.carruthers1@nhs.net

Sam McLaren 0191 2448990

samantha.mclaren5@nhs.net

Deb McParlin 0191 2139239

debbie.mcparlin@nhs.net

Useful support websites

The Somerville
Foundation

www.thesf.org.uk



British heart foundation

www.bhf.org.uk



CHUF

www.chuf.org.uk

