

## Managing other conditions

### Cardiovascular

#### What happens if I've already got cardiovascular disease (heart or circulatory)?

It is important to never ignore how you feel, especially if you start to experience the following symptoms:

- worsening chest pain
- facial drooping
- speech difficulties
- shortness of breath
- or... palpitations and fainting!

Please **DO NOT DELAY** in getting help and ring 999 if you develop any of the above symptoms.

People with existing heart conditions may have some additional concerns about catching the COVID. You are no more at risk of catching the virus than anyone else but if you do then you could become more ill. As COVID affects the lungs, it can also have an effect on the heart. The lungs and heart are interconnected, with the lungs oxygenating the blood the heart pumps. This can put someone with heart disease at further risk because the body already has an existing condition to 'cope with'.

Patients with heart disease also tend to have other medical conditions, such as high blood pressure and diabetes, which puts them at a higher risk of developing a severe illness from the virus.

#### Medication

It is important that you continue taking the medication that has been prescribed for you. Otherwise this could have an effect on your overall condition and possibly make you feel worse. If you have any concerns or queries about your medication please speak to your local pharmacist or your General Practitioner (GP). Your local surgery or pharmacist can organise a delivery for you.

If you do need to be admitted to hospital, please remember to bring an up to date list of your medication with you.

It is strongly recommended you continue medications that treat high blood pressure, such as ACE-Inhibitors and Angiotensin Receptor Blockers. There have been reports that these medications may increase both the risk of infection and severity of COVID.

However, there is not enough evidence to support this warning. (Statement from European Society of Cardiology).

### **Hospital Appointments**

Hospitals have had to postpone many non-urgent hospital appointments and planned procedures due to the COVID outbreak. These decisions have been made in line with national guidance. Patients should be contacted by their local hospital teams to see how their appointment has been affected and you may be offered another appointment when it is safe to do so.

Some appointments may go ahead and these will be offered either face-to-face (urgent appointments) or via a telephone.

If you are unsure what has happened to your appointment then please contact your local hospital switchboard or ring the number on the appointment letter.

However, it is important to remember that you should not attend if you have any symptoms of coronavirus or have suffered with sickness or diarrhoea in the last 48 hours.