

PREVENTION PROGRAM

There are known risk factors that increase an individual's chance of having a premature stroke or heart attack. Some of these factors can be modified to reduce the chances of these events happening.

At our surgery we try to identify our patients who may benefit from intervention and offer them the most up to date and appropriate treatment that will reduce their risks. We offer regular monitoring to ensure that modifiable parameters are properly controlled and regular advice is available.

Care is shared between the doctors and the specialist nurse. It is advisable for all those identified as having an increased risk to see the specialist nurse at least once a year. The doctors are always on hand to give their expert advice.

We do send out reminders when monitoring is overdue, but we encourage self awareness and responsibility which is key to the success of any prevention program.

Preventative measures can reduce your chances of a premature heart attack or stroke by 30%

THE RISK FACTORS

- **Previous event**
- **Smoking**
- **Family History**
- **Raised Blood Pressure**
- **Raised Cholesterol**
- **Diabetes**
- **Obesity**
- **Other medical conditions**

Previous event

If you have been unfortunate enough to have had a heart attack or stroke you are probably already on medication designed to prevent further occurrences. It is important to have regular check ups including blood tests to monitor if your medication is appropriate and your risks are being minimised.

Smoking

Smoking is the single biggest risk factor that you or we can change. If you need help in giving up we run smoking cessation clinics to help you, just ask at reception. It could add years to your life.

Family History

If you have one or more family members who have had a heart attack or stroke before the age of sixty this may put you at greater risk. Discuss with the doctor about the most appropriate way to monitor and minimize your risks.

Diabetes

People with diabetes are especially at risk of developing cardiovascular disease and viceversa. We monitor blood sugars of those at risk regularly.

Raised Blood Pressure

Blood pressure usually increases with age. As arteries become less elastic and the body's regulatory mechanisms become less competent the blood pressure may drift up. If blood pressure is consistently 160/100 or above there is an increased risk of future heart attack or stroke. We take every opportunity to check our patient's blood pressure. If they are found to be at risk we offer advice and medication to keep blood pressure to 140/90 or below which is known to reduce the risk.

Raised Cholesterol

Cholesterol is a fatty substance associated with "hardening" of the arteries. Some of it is acquired in the diet by eating animal fat and dairy products. It is also manufactured in the liver. High levels of cholesterol may pose a risk but for most people its risk is dependant on other factors such as age, smoking and BP. We use tables to assess an individual's risk. If the risk is >20% in 10 years we would recommend medical treatment to reduce cholesterol to 5 or less.

Obesity

Being overweight has been shown to be a major factor in coronary heart disease and diabetes. Loosing weight significantly improves life expectancy. We can help you with dietetic advice and medication where appropriate.