



Newsletter of the Heart Failure Community in Scotland



What is Atrial Fibrillation?



Heart Failure Hub Scotland



New Highland Services

Staying well over winter



With winter comes a whole array of yucky bugs, colds and flu. Having a long-term illness such as a chest, heart or stroke condition puts you at greater risk of flu-related complications. Try to stay well this winter with our top tips from Megan Dabb our Health Promotion Specialist:

- **Get the flu jab** – the best defence against the flu is to get vaccinated. If you are over 65 or have a long-term health condition, speak to your GP as soon as possible about having the flu jab.
- **Regularly wash your hands** with soap and warm water, especially after coughing, blowing your nose, using the bathroom and before eating food.
- **Eating well** – boost your immunity by eating a balanced diet with three meals per day and plenty of antioxidant-rich fruit and vegetables (choose a variety of colours). Try some wholesome warming foods such as porridge, stewed fruit or a bowl of lentil soup.



- **Stay active** – boost your mood and your immunity by moving more. There are plenty of ways of keeping active in winter including indoor activities like swimming, ten-pin bowling or yoga.
- **A good night's sleep** is crucial for maintaining good health and lack of sleep can increase your chance of catching a cold. Find out how to sleep like a baby tonight.
- **Improve gut health** – a healthy gut can improve your overall health and wellbeing. Boost the good bacteria in your gut by including extra fibre (wholegrains, pulses, fruit and vegetables), prebiotics (such as onions, garlic, asparagus and bananas) and probiotics (fermented foods like yoghurt (with live cultures) or fermented drinks). Note: probiotics contain live bacteria which is safe for most people – if you have a compromised immune system, seek advice from your GP first.
- And lastly, if you do become unwell with the lurgy, it's best to stay at home until you're well again. As much as your friends, family and work mates love you, they'd prefer if you kept your bugs to yourself!



• **Stress** can reduce your body's ability to stay well – take some time out for yourself each day – go for a walk, read a book, or practice being mindful.

• **Vitamins** – a healthy balanced diet should provide most people with all of the vitamins and minerals they need. A common belief is that Vitamin C helps to prevent colds and flus, but there is no evidence to support this. It may however, reduce the duration of a cold by about half a day. Vitamin D is also really important over the winter months due to a lack of sunlight – find out if you need to take vitamin D during winter.

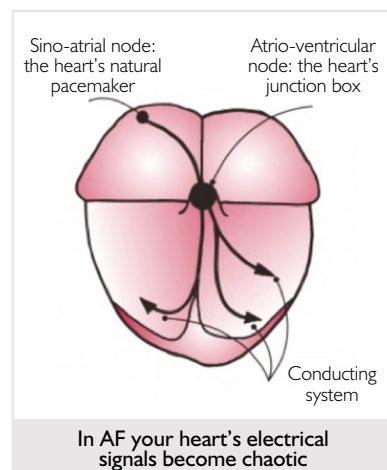
For more further information on these top tips speak to your GP or visit our 'Live Better Blog' www.chss.org.uk/livebetterblog

What is Atrial Fibrillation?

Atrial Fibrillation (AF) is one of the most common forms of abnormal heart rhythm. As you get older, the chance of developing AF increases. In Scotland around 96,000 people are known to have AF. AF and heart failure are conditions that share common risk factors and a person can have both conditions.

In AF, abnormal electrical signals cause the heart's upper chambers (atria) to squeeze randomly and sometimes so fast that the heart muscle can't relax properly between contractions.

This can cause an irregular (no pattern to the beats) and sometimes fast pulse making it difficult for the heart to send blood around the body. Sadly, for some, AF can result in clots forming and travelling to other parts of the body. If a clot travels to the brain it can cause a stroke.



What are the symptoms of AF and how is it treated?

When the heart beats in an irregular way it

doesn't work efficiently and the following symptoms may occur: dizziness, tiredness, chest pain, shortness of breath and palpitations.

Some people may have no symptoms and AF may only be discovered when a nurse or doctor feels their pulse and finds it to be irregular.

With early recognition and treatment future risk can be greatly reduced. Treatments include thinning the blood, slowing and regulating the heart beat and correcting the electrical pathway. Which treatment is best for you will depend on the type of AF that you have and how it affects you.

To find out more about AF please visit www.chss.org.uk/af

Remember if you notice a sudden change in your heartbeat and have chest pain you should always seek urgent medical advice.



Working Together to Tackle AF



Chest Heart & Stroke Scotland are part of the Scottish Parliament's Cross Party Group on Heart Disease and Stroke. The Group brings together MSPs from across the political parties together with health professionals, charities, service users and other experts, to help ensure that tackling heart disease and stroke remains a priority for the Scottish Government. The Group is currently

running an Inquiry into Atrial Fibrillation that is looking at the diagnosis, treatment and care of people with AF, and is gathering evidence from a wide range of health professionals and service users. A consultation was carried out over the summer, and in November the Inquiry completed a series of round-table discussion forums. Findings are to be published in January 2018. For more information about the Inquiry see the 'campaigns' section at www.chss.org.uk or contact Katherine.byrne@chss.org.uk



Carol Anderson our Peer Support Worker for East of Scotland was in attendance

Ensuring Success for People with Heart Failure

The Scottish Heart Failure Hub aims to help shape the future of heart failure care in Scotland.

In October, the Heart Failure Hub brought heart failure patients together in Dunblane for its second conference on "Ensuring Success for People with Heart Failure in Scotland." CHSS was at the conference to hear from patients' experiences, and to highlight the advice and information we have available. Useful sessions on the day covered how to access welfare benefits, and a chance to experience the health and wellbeing benefits of Tai Chi. Health professionals and academics gave talks on the latest medicines available to heart failure patients, and inherited cardiac conditions. Patients who attended the day could feed in their own expertise and experiences through workshops.

For more information about the Scottish Heart failure Hub follow the link: <http://www.heartfailurehubscotland.co.uk>



HEART FAILURE
HUB SCOTLAND

WORD SEARCH Can you find the following shows and pantomines?

S	T	O	R	Y	P	Q	T	N	W
A	S	P	E	C	T	S	H	E	E
A	T	I	V	E	L	T	G	V	A
S	N	O	W	K	M	O	I	O	C
C	I	N	D	E	R	E	L	L	A
G	W	H	I	T	E	Y	R	P	T
S	S	E	R	P	X	E	A	W	S
I	O	S	B	E	C	A	T	E	X
D	F	S	O	U	T	H	S	S	A
E	P	A	C	I	F	I	C	T	E

EVITA

CATS

CINDERELLA

SOUTH PACIFIC

STARLIGHT EXPRESS

ASPECTS OF LOVE

WEST SIDE STORY

SNOW WHITE

Extract from *The Activity Year Book: A Week by Week Guide for Use in Elderly Day and Residential Care* by Anni Bowden and Nancy Lewthwaite, published by Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

Exciting new service coming to Highland



Hi! My name is Jill Henry. In September I was appointed to the new role of Telephone & Peer Support Coordinator for Highland.

I want to work with people (and their carers) living with lung and heart conditions. The aim is to provide telephone support to those who live in rural areas of Highland. We hope that this will help to reduce feelings of loneliness or isolation.

I hope to work with the nurse specialists at various points of people's journey following diagnosis of a heart or lung condition. I have been in nursing for over 25 years, and still enjoy learning new things. Part of nursing which I have found most rewarding is providing psychological support to people, and I look forward to bringing that to my new role.

I am very excited about my new post, with Chest Heart and Stroke Scotland (CHSS). I am at the beginning of what, I hope, is going to bridge the gap for people leaving hospital and living at home or in the community. I hope we will be able to support people to live well with what might be a "new normal" for them.

I am in contact with many of our peer support groups and the CHSS staff that support them. I met some of you while raising awareness of COPD on World COPD day. The

Cheerful Chesters invited me to join them at Tesco in Inverness Retail Park. I was inspired by the hard work of the group and the way they managed to raise awareness. Many people from CHSS offered support in the way of phone calls or messages, which we were very grateful for. It was a busy day – non-stop chat! I met so many people happy to tell of their experiences and how it felt for them and family members. I listened to you all, and everything I heard will help shape the service.

I have connected with many of the doctors and nurses you will already know and they have been enthusiastic about improving services.

The need has been identified and I feel ready to walk along beside you and help to bring the many excellent services together.

We can do this together.

If you'd like to know more you can contact Jill:

E-mail: Jill.Henry@chss.org.uk

Telephone: 07733 614 861

We are reviewing our newsletters and would love to hear from you with any ideas, comments or suggestions you might have.

Help shape future editions of Take Heart by getting in touch with us in any of the ways below;

Email: takeheart@chss.org.uk

Telephone: Call our Adviceline Nurses FREE on 0800 801 0899 and let them know your thoughts.

Or

Send us a letter addressed to:

Cardiac Coordinator, Chest Heart & Stroke Scotland, 3rd Floor, Rosebery House, 9 Haymarket Terrace, Edinburgh EH12 5EZ

Have Your Say!

Editorial Contact: Sarah Smith Tel: 0131 346 3644 Email: sarah.smith@chss.org.uk

Chest Heart & Stroke Scotland, 3rd Floor, Rosebery House, 9 Haymarket Terrace, Edinburgh EH12 5EZ

We try to be as up-to-date as possible with our newsletter, but sometimes we are unable to withdraw copies if a bereavement has happened close to mailing or we are unaware of it. We would like to offer our apologies if this has happened to you. Please let us know and we will amend our records.

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