

Information for patients when the cause of their pain is uncertain - but serious heart disease has been ruled out

The results of your tests:

The blood tests we have taken today have shown that there is no damage to your heart.

Your exercise treadmill test showed no evidence of serious heart disease.

If you have any further questions relating to these results telephone **0114 2715969**,

9.00am to 5.00pm,

Monday to Friday, to speak to one of the chest pain nurses.

Alternatively telephone the hospital switchboard, on 0114 243 4343 and ask them to bleep the chest pain nurses on bleep 807.

All the results from your tests have come back normal, which means that it is highly unlikely that you have any serious heart disease. However the tests cannot rule out heart disease completely or predict whether you will develop it in the future. Even if you have normal test results there is still a small possibility that your chest pain may be heart pain.

What does this mean?

The important thing to remember is that there are many causes of chest pain and many of these are not serious or life threatening. The most common causes of chest pain include spasm or indigestion in the gullet (food pipe) or muscular pains in the chest wall. Your pain is probably caused by one of these. Although we do not know the exact cause of your pain the tests we have done show us that you are at low risk of having a serious problem and there is no need to investigate your chest pain further at the present time.

What will happen next?

Because we are happy that your symptoms do not indicate a serious heart problem we are happy for you to go home. Once home you can resume your normal activities.

Your symptoms should settle within a month. If this is the case then there is no need to investigate your chest pain further and you can be reassured that your pain is nothing to worry about. If however your symptoms continue it is important to discuss this with your G.P.

What can I do now?

Simple changes in your lifestyle can significantly reduce the chance of you developing heart problems in the future.

- **If you smoke – stop!** This is the most important thing that any smoker can do to improve their health. By giving up smoking you can reduce the risk of developing many smoking related illnesses. For practical advice on stopping, contact your GP, contact the NHS Smoking Helpline on 0800 169 0169, or have a look at their website at www.givingupsmoking.co.uk or look at www.bhf.org.uk/hearthealth.
- **Keep working.** Whatever the cause most people with chest pain should be able to continue in their usual job. Some changes to what you do at work and how you do it may be needed. Staying at work can help to keep your heart healthy.
- **Be more physically active.** Physical activity can help to keep your heart healthy and help to keep your weight down. Also, most people feel generally better when they are fit. For further information look at www.bhf.org.uk/hearthealth
- **Control high blood pressure.** If you have high blood pressure it is important to control it. Things that can help to do this include:
 - Increasing physical activity
 - Losing weight
 - Cutting down on alcohol and salt intake.
- **Eat fish and fish oil.** Eating oily fish such as herring, kippers, mackerel, pilchards, sardines, salmon, fresh tuna, trout and anchovies twice a week may help to prevent blood clots from forming in the arteries that supply the heart. Eating them regularly may also reduce the risk of you having a stroke.
- **Eat more fruit and vegetables.** People who eat more than 5 portions of fruit and vegetables a day are less likely to have heart disease. There is no evidence however that taking vitamin tablets has the same effect.
- **Control your weight.** By keeping close to your recommended weight for your height you will keep your blood pressure down and reduce the amount of work your heart has to do. Remember that losing weight involves both eating healthily and increasing physical activity. The British Heart Foundation provides information, advice and even recipe books to help you lose weight and stay healthy: see www.bhf.org.uk/hearthealth or phone **020 7935 0185**.

- **Reduce stress.** Identify situations that make you feel stressed at home or at work. Avoid them if you can or work out ways of dealing with them. Use a stress-reducing technique that suits you, such as yoga, relaxation tapes, or physical exercise. *'Manage Your Mind'* (Butler, G & Hope, T; Oxford University Press) is an excellent book that can help you to manage the stresses in your life. If you prefer the web, have a look at www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk or www.sheffield.nhs.uk/health for local information.
- **Relaxation** will help you to reduce muscle tension which can cause chest pain. Practise (using a relaxation tape if possible) for 30 minutes once or twice a day for the first few weeks. Decide on a time of day, ensure it is somewhere quiet and comfortable, and record your progress in a diary.

For more advice on how to relax and manage stress, read *'Manage Your Mind'* (Butler, G & Hope, T: Oxford University Press).

Alternatively, on the web, have a look at:

www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk

or

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