

STROKE/TIA INFORMATION SHEET

A stroke is a serious medical condition that occurs when the blood supply to part of the brain is cut off. If this happens temporarily it is known as a transient ischaemic attack (TIA) or mini-stroke. A TIA can be a warning sign that a stroke is coming.

Why should I attend my stroke review?

The risk of having a further stroke can be reduced with lifestyle changes and specific medicines. Your review appointment is a regular opportunity to discuss changes to your lifestyle and treatment that will benefit you. These changes will also help to reduce your risk of diabetes, high blood pressure and heart disease. The appointment is an opportunity to raise any questions or concerns you have about your health and medication.

What will happen at my appointment?

The nurse will discuss your condition with you and ask specific questions to find out if you are having any problems. She will ask about your lifestyle and your medication and check your height and weight, along with your blood pressure and pulse. An irregular pulse is a risk factor for having a further stroke. She will also perform some blood tests. She will then be able to advise you about any changes she would recommend. If needed, she will refer you to a doctor for further review.

What lifestyle changes will help me?

- Stopping smoking and reduce your risk of further stroke as well as other cardiovascular diseases, COPD and cancer. You can get help and support from 0800 052 5855 and www.smokefree.nhs.uk
- Reducing your intake of foods high in saturated fat such as butter, cheese, cakes and biscuits. Small amounts of unsaturated fat has benefits e.g. oily fish, avocados, seeds.
- Increasing your regular exercise if needed. Advice can be obtained from www.prescription4exercise.com
- Weight loss if your BMI is greater than 25
- Reducing your alcohol intake to less than 14 units a week for women and 21 units a week for men. For help and support contact 0300 555 5999 and www.bdaat.co.uk

What tests may help me?

- Diabetes screen – if you are diabetic this increases the likelihood of having problems with your cardiovascular disease.
- Cholesterol measurement – too much cholesterol increases the risk of atherosclerosis.
- Blood pressure measurement – high blood pressure is a risk factor for coronary heart disease.
- Kidney function testing.

What medication may help me?

- Antiplatelet drugs such as Aspirin and Clopidogrel, which thin the blood and help to prevent clots.
- Drugs such as warfarin that thin the blood.
- Statins to lower cholesterol e.g. Simvastatin, Atorvastatin
- Medication to reduce blood pressure such as ACE inhibitors and calcium channel blockers.