

North Devon Defib Newsletter

Summer Issue: July 2014

Welcome to our first North Devon Defib Newsletter.

We hope that this twice-yearly publication will provide an important link for patients in North Devon who have an Implantable Cardioverter Defibrillator (ICD). The newsletter aims to provide support and information about how an ICD works and give advice enabling you to lead a full and active life.

In this issue we will:

- ◇ Give feedback from the defib support group meetings
- ◇ Answer some frequently asked questions.
- ◇ Introduce the support team



Above: Sarah Bryant and
Angie Tithecott
Support Group Facilitators

ICD Support Group

It is well recognised that having an ICD can be a stressful experience and meeting other people in similar circumstances can be reassuring. The implementation meeting in March highlighted the need for more information and better communication to reduce fears, before and after ICD implantation.

At the first support group meeting in June Dr Gibbs, Consultant Cardiologist, gave a presentation on 'ICDs - all you need to know!' which was a great success with over 40 people attending.

Thank you to all those who attended, and apologies for the cramped conditions, but we didn't realise Dr Gibbs was so popular!

Arrhythmia Service

Sarah Bryant was appointed in July 2013 to develop a comprehensive Arrhythmia service in North Devon. Sarah possesses an excellent knowledge base of arrhythmias, heart function and treatments.

The arrhythmia service aims to provide co-ordination of care for patients with abnormal heart rhythms. The service supports patients and carers by providing a point of contact, offering advice and guidance on their arrhythmia, medication and treatments. This involves supporting the cardioversion service and providing pre-implant and follow up support of patients with an ICD, including setting up a support group.

HEART RHYTHM CONGRESS 2014

Patient Day

Sunday 5th October 2014

For more information contact:

info@heartrhythmcharity.org.uk

Or Tel: 01789 867501

Heart Failure Service

Angie Tithecott and Lisa Bullard are Heart Failure Specialist Nurses. This service is available to patients with heart failure due to left ventricular systolic dysfunction (impaired pumping of left main heart chamber), confirmed by echocardiogram (an ultrasound heart scan).

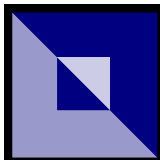
The service supports patients and carers by providing a point of contact to allay fears and concerns, offering advice and information on this condition, medication/treatment, self-care strategies, managing symptoms and adjusting lifestyle. They also monitor symptoms and adjust medication.

DATE FOR YOUR DIARY

The next ICD support group meeting will take place on
Tuesday 16th September 2014 from 6pm-7.30pm.

The guest speaker will be Dr Candy Hayward,
Principal Clinical Psychologist.

Venue to be confirmed. More details to follow.



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Frequently Asked Questions

How long will the battery last?

An ICD battery usually lasts between four and six years. The physiologists at your ICD clinic will keep a close check on the life of your battery and will not allow it to run out fully.

What does it feel like when my ICD gives its treatment?

Some patients have reported that having a shock can feel like they have been suddenly kicked or punched in the chest. These shocks can be quite painful but the pain will only last for a few seconds, others may not feel anything.

What do I do after receiving treatment from my ICD?

Even if you feel well after the shock you should still contact the ICD clinic to arrange to have your device checked. However, if you feel unwell or if your device has given you several shocks, please dial 999 for an ambulance to bring you into your nearest hospital. Your ICD will be checked to find out why the shock was given.

If someone is touching me when I receive treatment will they be harmed?

If someone is with you when you have the shock, they will probably notice you jolt. No harm will come to anyone who is touching you, they may just feel a slight tingling sensation. Indeed, it can be very comforting and reassuring to have someone put their arm around you or hold your hand as you experience a shock.

Can my ICD be switched off?

Your ICD can be switched off (deactivated) if needed, for example if you need to have some kinds of surgery or if your ICD isn't working correctly. If your health worsens and you are near the end of your life, turning off your ICD will help you to die peacefully without unnecessary suffering.

Can I travel abroad?

You can safely travel abroad with your ICD, but you are advised to show the security staff your identification card. They may have a hand search or you may be asked to walk through the metal detector archway which will set off the airport security alarm. The detector will not cause any harm to your ICD. You will need to make sure that your travel insurance company is aware that you have an ICD.

Can I resume sexual activity?

It is very common to be reluctant to resume sexual activity. It is rare to get a shock during sex, however the device will not cause any harm to your partner, even if a shock is delivered to you during intercourse.

Useful links:

British Heart Foundation Tel: 020 7935 0185 - Website: www.bhf.org.uk

Arrhythmia Alliance Tel: 01789 450 787 - Website: <http://heartrhythmcharity.org.uk>

Cardiomyopathy Association Tel: 01923 249977 - Website: www.cardiomyopathy.org

Arrhythmia Service

Sarah Bryant
01271 311633

Heart Failure Service

Angie Tithecott and
Lisa Bullard
01271 311633

Cardiac Rehabilitation

01271 311838

Cardiologist Secretaries

Dr Tim Roberts 01271 322418

Dr Chris Gibbs 01271 314131

Dr Dushen Tharmaratnam 01271 322438



Above: Dr Chris Gibbs, Dr Tim Roberts,
Dr Dushen Tharmaratnam

ICD Clinic**Cardio-Respiratory Dept**

Christine Pope
Lead Physiologist
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