

**Welcome to our 7<sup>th</sup> North Devon Defib Newsletter.**

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:

- ◇ Next ICD support group meeting: Friday 26th January 2018 (see below)
- ◇ Medicine Cabinet: Aspirin
- ◇ Know the difference between a Heart Attack & a Cardiac Arrest

**ICD Patient Support Group:** Thank you to everyone who attended the meetings in 2017. We held a Healthy Living Workshop and measured blood pressures and pulses and provided advice on Diet, Activity & Travel. SW Ambulance gave a presentation and demonstration of CPR & how to use a Public Access Defibrillator. Dr Tharmaratnam also gave an interesting talk on medications to support heart function.

As always the meetings were well attended and feedback confirms how valuable you find the advice and support from each other.

**North Devon Defib Support Group Meeting**  
**Dr Tim Roberts, Consultant Cardiologist,**  
**will be giving a presentation on the difference between**  
**Heart Attack, Cardiac Arrest and Heart Failure.**

**Date & Time:** Friday 26th January 2018 10:30—12:00

**Venue:** Christchurch, Bear Street, Barnstaple EX32 7BU

**Please let us know if you are able to attend by contacting:**

**Sarah Bryant or Angie Tithecott Tel: 01271 311633**

**Medicine Cabinet: Aspirin**

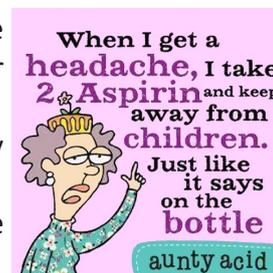
People with cardiovascular disease may be prescribed a small dose of aspirin to help prevent blood clots forming. Typically, a daily dose of aspirin (75mg) is prescribed for people who have cardiovascular disease, such as peripheral arterial disease or a heart attack. Aspirin can inhibit circulating blood cells known as platelets, which stick together and block cuts and breaks in blood vessels, and are important in normal health. However, in people at risk of heart attacks, platelets can stick together inside blood vessels causing a clot and stop blood flowing to the heart.

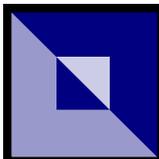


**What are the possible side effects?**

The most likely side effect is an increased risk of bleeding because aspirin reduces the risk of platelets sticking together. These bleeds are often very minor, but occasionally patients may experience severe bleeds, e.g. in the stomach or intestines. Symptoms of severe bleeds include upper abdominal pain, passing blood or black stools, or vomiting blood. If this happens, seek urgent medical attention. A severe bleed in the brain can lead to a stroke, but this is very rare.

Occasionally, people who have asthma find they are sensitive to aspirin and that it can cause an asthmatic attack.





## Know the difference between a Cardiac Arrest and a Heart Attack

A **heart attack** happens when an artery supplying blood to the heart muscle becomes blocked. This starves part of the heart muscle of oxygen and causes symptoms such as chest pain or discomfort. A person having a heart attack is usually still conscious and breathing. If a heart attack isn't treated, it can lead to a cardiac arrest.

A **cardiac arrest** is caused by an electrical problem in the heart. This electrical problem causes the heart to stop pumping blood around the body and to the brain. It causes the person to fall unconscious and stop breathing. Without CPR the person will die within minutes. CPR should only be used if someone is:

- ◆ unconscious and not breathing
- ◆ unconscious and not breathing normally

### How does CPR help?

By performing chest compressions and rescue breaths, you are taking over the role of their heart and lungs, pumping blood and oxygen around their body.

Every second counts – any delay can quickly reduce a person's chance of survival.

### How to perform CPR?

Step 1: Shake and shout

Step 2: Check for normal breathing

Step 3: Call 999

Step 4: Give 30 chest compressions

Step 5: Give two rescue breaths

Step 6: Repeat until an ambulance arrives

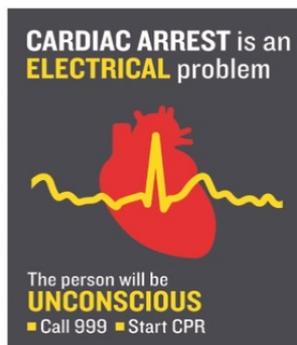
Remember – even if you haven't been trained in CPR with rescue breathing, you can still use hands-only CPR.

### How do defibrillators help?

When a person has a cardiac arrest a defibrillator can be used to shock the heart back into a normal rhythm.

Defibrillators are simple and safe to use, and will not shock unless it's appropriate. They're available to the public in busy locations like shopping centres, sports stadiums and train stations across the UK.

For more details view British Heart Foundation website (details below) go to 'Heart Health' then 'Save a Life'.



#### Useful links:

**British Heart Foundation** Tel: 020 7935 0185 - Website: [www.bhf.org.uk](http://www.bhf.org.uk)

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

#### Arrhythmia Service

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#### Heart Failure Service

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#### Cardiologist Secretaries

Dr Tim Roberts 01271 322418  
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#### ICD Clinic, Cardio-Respiratory Dept

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