

What happens in the Ambulatory Heart Function Unit

This leaflet explains the intravenous diuretic treatment carried out in the Ambulatory Heart Function Unit (formerly the Heart Failure Lounge).

Why do I need intravenous diuretics?

Diuretics are medication to increase the amount of water and salt passed from the body as urine, which will relieve ankle swelling and breathlessness caused by heart failure. They are usually given in tablet form, but sometimes these do not work well enough and fluid can build up. In some people this can be sudden, in others it happens gradually. When tablets stop working, giving medicine by intravenous injection can be more effective. The diuretics are administered either using a cannula or a midline catheter in the arm. Midlines have the advantage of being left in place longer so can be used regularly.

Where does this happen?

This medication is given in the **Ambulatory Heart Function Unit** which is located in the Jim Shahi Unit via Cardiology Outpatients, on level 1 in Battle Block.

Having the treatment on a day case basis maintains quality of life and avoids a prolonged hospital stay. This reduces risks of hospital acquired infections, complications of reduced mobility, sleep deprivation and low mood, all of which are associated with long hospital stays.

What can I expect?

The Unit is open Monday to Friday, between 8am and 6pm. A course of treatment usually lasts between 7 and 10 days. You will need to attend the clinic every day. On your first visit you will have an ECG, a blood test, your weight recorded and a cannula or midline inserted. You will also have a consultation with the cardiologist or heart function nurse, who will set up a management plan with you.

Please plan to spend 4-5 hours at this appointment, so feel free to bring something to occupy your time. Free WiFi access is available for patients and visitors. Connect using the RBFT_GUEST network. All new users will need to login before connecting for the first time. We provide drinks and a sandwich for lunch, but you are welcome to bring your own refreshments. You can bring one relative to stay with you and a free parking permit can be provided.

On every visit you will be weighed, and usually have bloods taken and then the diuretics will be administered via a cannula or your midline. You will be monitored before and after the intravenous infusion and then be allowed home if all is well.

When you are discharged from the Ambulatory Heart Function Unit, your care will be transferred to the GP or the community heart function nurse.

If for any reason you are unable to attend or have any concerns please ring Jim Shahi Unit on 0118 322 6502.

Useful contacts

Royal Berkshire Hospital 0118 322 5111
Jim Shahi Unit 0118 322 6502
Cardiac Appointments 0118 322 6676
Cardiac Support Nurses 0118 322 6638
Cardiac Care Unit 0118 322 6684
NHS 111: 111
NHS website: www.nhs.uk
British Heart Foundation: www.bhf.org.uk

This leaflet is printed privately for the Cardiac Fund. It was set up in 1976 for the purpose of providing cardiac services that would otherwise not be available through National Health resources. Our Cardiac Laboratory was largely equipped through the fund and many other areas in the Department have also benefited from equipment and staff training.

If you would like to contribute please scan the QR code below to donate direct to the fund online, alternatively, cheques should be made payable to:

The Royal Berks Charity Cardiac Fund U226

Royal Berks Charity
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Please ask if you need this information in another language or format.

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