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Understanding High Blood Pressure

Pre-operative Assessment

Direct Lines:

Clatterbridge Hospital: **0151 482 7755**

Arrowe Park Hospital: **0151 604 7143**

Womens Unit: **0151 604 7142**

Eye Unit: **0151 604 7134**

Author:	Pre-operative Assessment
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To help us establish a true picture of your blood pressure away from the hospital environment, it would be helpful if you could obtain a few blood pressure checks from your practice nurse/ doctor.

Patient name _____

Date	B/P reading	Signature
1		
3		
3		
4		
5		

Please bring the above chart along with you on your admission to Clatterbridge Hospital or Arrowe Park Hospital.

Further information and advice can be obtained from:
British Heart Foundation
14 Fitzhardinge Street
London W1H 4DH
Tel: 0171 935 0185

Why do I need to see my Doctor?

At the assessment service today your blood pressure was recorded as:

Date _____ 1. _____ 2. _____

We are postponing your operation until, your blood pressure falls within the guidelines set by the consultant anaesthetists. (These are detailed in the letter to your doctor).

PLEASE NOTE: many people experience a temporary rise in blood pressure when faced with a stressful situation, such as a visit to hospital. We are therefore referring you to your doctor for future monitoring and advice.

What is Blood Pressure?

Blood pressure is a measurement of the pressure exerted on the artery walls with each beat of the heart.

Two types of pressure are measured:

Systolic – The higher reading – The pressure created by the hearts contraction.

Diastolic – The lower reading – The arterial pressure when the heart relaxes.

Although medical opinion varies, a persons blood pressure can be considered to be normal if the **Systolic reading** is 140 or lower and the **Diastolic reading** is 90 or less.

REMEMBER that this is a guide only, blood pressure varies from minute to minute, changes with activity and increases with age. Your doctor will take all of these factors into consideration when measuring your blood pressure.

What is high Blood Pressure / Hypertension?

Hypertension is a common condition. It is breakdown of the mechanisms, which control normal blood pressure. Most people are completely unaware that they have this problem and may feel perfectly well. However it is most important to seek advice from your doctor as consistently high readings need close observation.

What factors influence Blood Pressure?

There are many factors, which affect blood pressure:

Anxiety - A temporary rise in blood pressure can occur in response to a stressful situation, such as a visit to the hospital. This is now recognised as **"White Coat Syndrome"** and does not usually require treatment.

Some other factors include –

- Family history
- Alcohol
- Obesity
- Stress
- Unhealthy lifestyle
- Smoking
- Age
- Unknown factors

Will I need any treatment?

This will be for your doctor to decide:

Your blood pressure will need to be checked on several occasions before a diagnosis is made. Even if hypertension is diagnosed medical treatment is not always necessary. Sometimes changes to your lifestyle will be effective in reducing your blood pressure.

What can I do to help?

A healthy lifestyle can have a positive effect on your blood pressure. Listed below are some changes you may like to consider:

1. If overweight, try to achieve a sensible weight for your height.
If your weight is within the normal range then follow a low fat healthy eating plan.
2. Reduce alcohol intake. A sensible limit would be 1-2 units daily.
1 unit = small glass of wine, half pint of beer or more measure of spirits.
3. Stop smoking, as smoking raises your blood pressure.
4. Taking regular exercise, such as walking or swimming is excellent.

Always check with your doctor first.

5. Relaxation, try to avoid situations which cause stress or worry.
Set aside 10-15 minutes each day to do something you enjoy such as relaxing in a quiet room, listening to music or reading.

6. There is some evidence to suggest salt reduction helps to reduce blood pressure. Try to avoid adding salt to cooking or at the table, and avoid salty foods.

Remember, be positive and focus on one problem at a time.

Further help and advice can be obtained from your doctor or practice nurse.

This all sounds very difficult – I feel well, do I really need to change?

If high blood pressure is diagnosed:

Yes – because untreated high blood pressure puts you at risk of stroke, angina or heart attack. It can also cause kidney damage and sight problems. **However** evidence suggests that with effective treatment the risk is greatly reduced. **So please make an appointment to visit your doctor and get your blood pressure checked.**

What will happen now, when will I have my operation?

Your doctor or practice nurse will monitor your blood pressure on several occasions before a diagnosis is made.

When / if your blood pressure is within normal safe limits your doctor will inform the admissions department and you will be sent a new date for assessment and surgery. Please note, you will not go to the back of the waiting list.

Remember your heart is a small miracle, so look after it.

Should you have any problems or unanswered questions then please feel free to contact your assessment nurse.

Name _____

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