



FIRSWAY HEALTH CENTRE

Cardiovascular Risk Score 10-20% Patient Information Leaflet

WHY ARE YOU GETTING THIS LEAFLET?

You are getting this leaflet because you have had a recent cholesterol blood test. As you may know cholesterol is only one risk factor for cardiovascular conditions such as heart disease and stroke.

Along with other risk factors, we can now calculate the likelihood of you developing cardiovascular disease within the next 10 years.

WHAT ARE THE RISK FACTORS?

Risk factors are elements in your current health or family history that increase the risk of developing heart disease or stroke. The following is a list of some of those risk factors (not all may apply to you):

- Age (being older)
- Sex (being male)
- Smoking
- High blood pressure
- Diabetes
- Strong family history of heart disease
- Poor diet and excessive alcohol
- Lack of exercise
- Being overweight
- Ethnic origin

Unfortunately, the more risk factors you have, the greater your risk of developing cardiovascular disease.

WHAT DOES RISK MEAN?

Whilst it may be shocking to hear your risk of developing a serious condition in such stark terms as a percentage value, it is important to realise several things about risk:

- **Risk is never zero** in anybody, whether young or old
- **Risk naturally increases** as we get older, regardless of other risk factors
- **Risk is a chance** of something happening, but this also means there will always be a chance of that something not happening
- **Risk can never be completely abolished.** Life itself is always risky!

A risk score of less than 10% (low risk) means that there is less than a one in ten chance of something like a stroke or heart attack occurring in the next 10 years.

A risk score of 10-20% (moderate risk) means that there is between a one to two in ten chance of something like a stroke or heart attack occurring in the next 10 years.

A risk score of 20% (high risk) equates to at least a two in ten chance.

WHAT CAN YOU DO TO LOWER YOUR RISK?

Whatever your risk score, it is always sensible to try and lower your risk. You will not be able to change things like your age, your ethnic background or your family history, but there are always steps you can take to lower your risk in other ways. These include:

- Stop smoking if you smoke.
- Eat a healthy diet.
- Keep your weight and waist in check.
- Take regular physical activity.
- Cut back if you drink a lot of alcohol.

Current guidance suggests that patients with risk scores of 10% or more should be offered the option of starting medication to lower cholesterol (statins) in addition to making lifestyle changes.

You are receiving this leaflet because you have a moderate risk score and whether you decide to take a statin or not, we feel you should know about statins so that you can make an informed choice.

WHAT ARE STATINS?

These are a group of drugs that help to lower cholesterol. They are effective at reducing levels of cholesterol and other harmful fats in the body and help to reduce the risk of heart attacks and strokes. Statins need to be taken regularly every day for the rest of your life to be effective. Although statins are generally safe, unwanted side effects may occur. These include headache, nausea, vomiting, diarrhoea, and less commonly inflammation of the muscles and liver problems. Statins can interact with some other drugs, and also grapefruit juice and are not suitable for people with liver disease, pregnant or breast feeding women.

It is important to say that even if statins are prescribed, they should not be used in isolation from other lifestyle changes and activities that will also help to reduce your overall risk. These will include some of the things mentioned above.

If you wish to start statins you would take 1 tablet once a day.

NEXT STEPS

If after reading and thinking about this, you do want to start on a statin, or have questions, please book a routine appointment with the doctor.

If you decide that after reading this leaflet, you do not wish to take a statin, then you do not need to see us. Please try and stay healthy by making the lifestyle changes indicated above.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION PLEASE VISIT:

British Heart Foundation: www.bhf.org.uk or phone 0300 330 3322

or

Patient UK Information Leaflets: www.patient.co.uk

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