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**Cardiovascular Rehabilitation Educational Module outlines**

**Atrial fibrillation (AF) & stroke**

The ‘AF and stroke’ module looks at the most common form of arrhythmia (AF) in more detail. We will discuss what AF is, the causes of AF, the signs, symptoms and treatments for AF. In this module, we will discuss the importance of knowing our pulse so we know the rhythm of our heart. We will take the pulse check challenge and practice taking our own pulse. The module will go on to discuss what a stroke is including the causes of a stroke, signs and symptoms and treatment. We will explore how AF is diagnosed and discuss the strong link between AF and stroke. Finally, we will discuss ways of preventing an AF related stroke and offer advice around living with AF.

**Basic Life Support (BLS) and automated external defibrillator (AED) use**

This module aims to give you the skills and confidence to be able to assist someone who may have a life threatening condition. We will cover how to help someone who is choking and also introduce the BLS algorhythm, identifying how to open the airway, check for breathing and perform cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR). The use of an automatic external defibrillator (AEDs) will be covered as well and how to place someone in the ‘recovery position’. There will be the option to have the opportunity to practice CPR but this is entirely optional.

**Cardiac Conditions**

This module will briefly recap on what cardiovascular disease is before discussing a number of common cardiovascular conditions such as angina, heart attack and valve disease. Questions are welcomed to ensure you fully understand your own cardiovascular diagnosis or condition. The module will also discuss the different cardiac devices (e.g. pacemaker, ICD, CRT) and their role in managing some cardiovascular conditions.

**Cardiovascular disease and the heart**

The ‘cardiovascular disease (CVD) and the heart’ module looks at what CVD is and what causes CVD. We will discuss the five main types of CVD (stroke; vascular dementia; coronary heart disease (CHD); aortic disease; peripheral arterial disease (PAD)) and what can increase the risk of developing CVD. We will also explore how the heart works and how you can check your own pulse. We will then discuss a number of tests, investigations and procedures which can be used to diagnose these conditions.

**Exercise for a healthy heart**

Regular exercise is one of the most important lifestyle changes to improve heart health and prevent further issues. In this module we will discuss the difference between physical activity and exercise, along with the many benefits associated with exercise. We will thoroughly discuss the importance of exercising safely and discuss the current recommendations for exercise. Advice will also be given regarding how to safely progress exercise levels as your fitness improves and how to overcome barriers to becoming more active. We will also discuss resuming sexual activity following a cardiac event. Finally, we will discuss the options that are available to you following completion of cardiovascular rehabilitation.

**Getting back on track**

The ‘Getting back on track’ module aims to give you information on a number of general areas we are asked about when living life with a cardiovascular condition. The module will cover areas such as holidays and flying; employment; driving; long term exercise; long term monitoring of heart conditions and keeping your risk factors in check. This is the opportunity for all those little questions which may be stopping you from living your life to the full to be asked!

**Healthy Eating**

This module aims to help increase your understanding of how what we eat and drink can have an impact on our heart health and provides an opportunity for us to discuss what foods make up a healthy diet. We will also highlight cardiovascular risk factors that can be improved through making positive choices in the food and drink we consume. It is also an opportunity to bust any myths relating to diet and our heart health. We will also examine food labels in order to help you make positive choices in the supermarket.

**Healthy mind, healthy heart**

Wellbeing has a great impact on your overall health. In this module we will highlight the term wellbeing and how it relates to you as an individual. We will also identify the difference between positive and negative thoughts and their relationship to behaviours and our overall health. It is also important to recognise when your health condition can have an impact on your wellbeing and when it may be necessary to seek support for issues such as depression. Finally, we will discuss a range of coping strategies and provide the opportunity to practice a relaxation technique.

**Heart failure explained**

**This module has been developed for patients who have specifically been given a diagnosis of ‘Heart failure’ by a Doctor or Specialist Nurse. If you are unsure whether this applies to you, please confirm with your cardiovascular rehabilitation officer.**

The ‘Heart failure explained’ module will cover the different types and causes of heart failure. Tests and investigations for diagnosing heart failure will be discussed and the subsequent treatments which are on offer for patients both nationally and within the Wirral area. The management of heart failure will also be explored, focusing on self-management, medication, devices, such as pacemakers, and other treatments such as iron therapy and surgical interventions.

**Managing your medicines**

This module will highlight some general information regarding taking prescription medications before covering the main classes of medications used to treat heart and vascular conditions. The importance of vaccinations for influenza and pneumonia will be discussed. For each medication group, the uses and potential side effects to be aware of will be explained. Medications discussed will include antiplatelets, beta-blockers, blood pressure medications, statins and diuretics, amongst others. We will discuss how to use your GTN spray or tablets if you have been prescribed them. Finally, the talk will cover relief medications and our nurse led medications optimisation clinics.

**Risk Factors**

There are many risk factors associated with cardiovascular disease and stroke. This module will highlight the main known cardiovascular risk factors and how these can affect your heart health. We will help you to understand in more detail some of the risks you can modify and also those that you cannot. This module gives us the opportunity to discuss lifestyle changes you can make to help reduce your risk of further cardiovascular events and other associated diseases such as diabetes and stroke. We will offer advice and support to help you identify and achieve your heart health goals, as knowing your risk factors will empower you to reduce your risk of further cardiovascular related episodes.

**Stress and your heart health**

Stress is a risk factor for heart disease which is usually underestimated. Stress is known as a controllable risk factor, therefore it is important to be able to known when to recognise stress. In this module we will discuss acute and chronic stress, the symptoms that can often be associated with stress and when stress can lead to anxiety. We will then explore stress and its relation to heart health and how people deal with stress in different ways. We will thoroughly discuss the various coping strategies that you can use if undergoing a stressful period and then finally give you opportunity to take part in a relaxation session.

**Weight Management**

There are many risk factors associated with being overweight including risks to our heart health. This module acts as an introduction to weight management and provides you with information and simple tools to help you to make lifestyle changes that will help with safe and effective weight loss. We will discuss barriers to losing weight and maintaining weight loss, as well as evidence based approaches to weight loss.

**Life with an ICD educational programme**

The service also delivers a two week education programme specifically designed for those people who have had an Implantable Cardioverter Defibrillator (ICD) fitted or are due to have one fitted. Studies have shown that taking part in education sessions about your ICD can be beneficial to your psychological and physical health.

The aim of this programme is to increase your knowledge about your ICD, tackle any concerns you may have when living with your ICD and attempt to improve your overall quality of life. The course will take place in an informal friendly environment, where you will get the chance to talk about your experiences, concerns, and have the opportunity to ask any questions.

The course is also available to members of your family or loved ones involved with your care if you would like them to attend with you.

Week 1: General information about an ICD and how it works

Week 2: Living life with your ICD

Please see the noticeboard for the dates of the next programme, or speak to a member of the cardiovascular rehabilitation team.

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**Further educational information can also be found on our Facebook page**

**Wirral Cardiovascular Rehabilitation / @wirralcardiacrehab**