

Familial hypercholesterolaemia screening

Chemical Pathology Patient Information Leaflet

Introduction

This leaflet gives information about a screening test for a condition called familial hypercholesterolaemia. It explains what the condition is, how it can be treated and what the screening test involves.

What is familial hypercholesterolaemia (FH)?

It is where a genetic problem causes high blood cholesterol, which is a type of fat in the blood. It is an inherited condition which means that it can be passed from one generation to another. Those affected have an increased risk of a heart attack or a stroke.

What causes FH?

FH is caused by a faulty gene which affects one in 500 people. If one parent has FH, there is a 50 per cent chance that their son or daughter may also have it.

What are the symptoms of FH?

The majority of people with FH, particularly younger people, have no symptoms and that is why it is important to screen them. Some people may have fat deposits around the cornea of the eye, on the eyelids or over the tendons of the hands, elbows, knees and ankles. Some, particularly older people, may have chest pain (angina) when they exercise.

How is FH diagnosed?

In most cases, FH is diagnosed by a blood test to check the cholesterol level. In some cases, confirmation can be made by testing for the faulty gene. FH is suspected if the cholesterol level is higher than expected for age and gender, and after other common causes of high cholesterol have been excluded.

What are the treatment options?

FH is usually treated with tablets called statins which have been well tried and tested. The aim of the treatment is to lower cholesterol levels and; therefore, reduce the risk of the person of having a heart attack or a stroke. People with FH also need to follow a low fat diet and take plenty of exercise.

What are the benefits of the treatment?

If treatment with statins is started early enough in people with FH, their risk of having heart attacks or strokes in future is greatly reduced.

What are the risks of the treatment?

Many studies in the past 20 years have shown that statins are effective and safe. However, a very small number of people taking statins may have side effects, such as muscle pains, which tend to go away when they are stopped.

What happens now?

Having looked at your family history, we think that it is important for you to have a simple blood test to check your cholesterol level and to decide if you have inherited the condition.

Enclosed is a request form for your blood test on which you need to complete your personal details. It is important that the following details are included on the form to ensure we get the results back to you and your GP:

- Full name
- Date of birth
- Current address
- GP's name and surgery address

To ensure we can access the results, the test needs to be carried out in one of the blood test departments at Russells Hall Hospital or Corbett and Guest Outpatient Centres. You do not need to make an appointment but remember to take the form with you.

Opening times are:

Russells Hall Hospital

Monday – 8am to 7.30pm

Tuesday – 5pm to 7.30pm

Wednesday – 8am to 7.30pm

Thursday – 12 noon to 7.30pm

Friday – 12 noon to 7.30pm

Saturday – 8am to 10am

Corbett Outpatient Centre

8am to 6pm, Monday to Friday

Guest Outpatient Centre

8am to 1pm, Monday to Friday

Children's blood tests are available at Russells Hall Hospital and Corbett Outpatient Centre between 9am and 5.30pm, Monday to Friday.

Do I need to do anything before my blood test?

You should not eat or drink anything (except water) from 10pm the night before your blood test. After the blood test, you can eat and drink normally.

How will I find out my results?

After having the test, please telephone the department's secretary on 01384 244078, to let her know that you have had the test. Within a few days, you will receive a letter with your results which will also be sent to your GP.

Can I find out more?

You can find out more from the following weblinks:

NHS Choices

<http://www.nhs.uk/Conditions/Cholesterol/Pages/Causes.aspx>

British Heart Foundation

<https://www.bhf.org.uk/heart-matters-magazine/medical/familial-hypercholesterolaemia>

Remember: do not eat or drink from 10pm the night before your blood test and complete the following details on your blood request form:

- Full name
- Date of birth
- Current address
- GP's name and surgery address

Phone the department's secretary on 01384 244078 to let us know that you have had the test.

Reference

National Institute of Health and Care Excellence (2008)
Identification and Management of Familial Hypercholesterolaemia.
London: NICE. Available at:

<https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/cg71/chapter/introduction>

If you have any questions, or if there is anything you do not understand about this leaflet, please ask a member of staff or contact:

Liz Higginson, Nurse Specialist Research and Metabolism on
01384 456111 ext. 2592

Russells Hall Hospital switchboard number: 01384 456111

This leaflet can be downloaded or printed from:

<http://dudleygroup.nhs.uk/services-and-wards/pathology/>

If you have any feedback on this patient information leaflet,
please email patient.information@dgh.nhs.uk

This leaflet can be made available in large print, audio version and in other languages, please call 0800 073 0510.

للحصول على هذه النشرة بحجم أكبر، وعلى شكل إصدار صوتي و بلغات أخرى، الرجاء الاتصال بالرقم 08000730510.

此宣传单可提供大字版本、音频版本和其它语言版本，请拨打电话：0800 073 0510。

Ulotka dostępna jest również w dużym druku, wersji audio lub w innym języku. W tym celu zadzwoń pod numer 0800 073 0510.

ਇਹ ਪਰਚਾ ਵੱਡੇ ਅੱਖਰਾਂ, ਬੋਲ ਕੇ ਰੀਕਾਰਡ ਕੀਤਾ ਹੋਇਆ ਅਤੇ ਦੂਸਰੀਆਂ ਭਾਸ਼ਾਵਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਵੀ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤ ਹੋ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ, 0800 073 0510 ਤੇ ਫੋਨ ਕਰੋ ਜੀ।

Aceasta brosură poate fi pusă la dispoziție tipărită cu caractere mari, versiune audio sau în alte limbi, pentru acest lucru va rugăm sunați la 0800 073 0510.

یہ کتابچہ آپ کو بڑے حروف کی لکھائی، سمعی صورت اور دیگر زبانوں میں مہیا کیا جا سکتا ہے۔ برائے مہربانی فون نمبر 08000730510 پر رابطہ کریں۔