

# Hypoxic Brain Injury Resulting from Cardiac Arrest

If you have any further questions or concerns after reading this leaflet, please speak to the staff member in charge of your care.

## What is a cardiac arrest?

A cardiac arrest is when the heart stops. This stops oxygenated blood, which is blood containing oxygen, from being pumped around the body.

This is different from a heart attack, which is when a segment of heart muscle dies as a result of a loss of blood supply to the heart.

## What is a hypoxic brain injury?

When the heart is not beating, the body's organs become deprived of oxygen. The brain can be affected by this lack of oxygen. This is known as a hypoxic brain injury and people may experience a range of neurological problems as a result.

## What causes a cardiac arrest?

Cardiac arrests can happen for a variety of reasons and can occur in fit and healthy people as well as someone with an existing health condition such as heart disease.

Your doctors will investigate the cause of your cardiac arrest and produce a treatment plan.

## Problems that may occur due to a hypoxic brain injury

Hypoxic brain injury may cause a variety of difficulties ranging from subtle to obvious, e.g.:

- Changes in thinking skills (memory, concentration)
- Insight (being aware of difficulties)
- Disorientation
- Personality changes
- Communication difficulties
- Drowsiness/reduced level of consciousness
- Balance impairments
- Physical weakness
- Difficulties swallowing
- Low mood.

These changes can impact your independence with day to day activities.

## The Neuro-Cardiac Therapy Team

We are made up of Occupational Therapy, Speech and Language Therapy and Physiotherapy specialising in neurological conditions.

### Neuro Occupational Therapy (OT)

We assess and treat patients who are unable to complete their chosen daily activities as a result of physical, cognitive and/or behavioural changes. We aim to maximise independence within activities of daily living, work and/or leisure. We do this by focusing treatment sessions on meaningful and purposeful tasks.

### Neuro Speech and Language Therapy (SLT)

We assess and treat patients with communication and swallowing difficulties, exploring any changes in your thinking skills for conversation and your ability to eat and drink safely.

### Neuro Physiotherapy (PT)

We assess and treat a variety of physical problems including strength, balance, reduced exercise tolerance and its impact on movement. We aim to progress your mobility and engagement in everyday tasks and activities that you enjoy.

## Medical and Therapy Input

You have been admitted to St George's for acute specialist cardiology care. When you are medically stable, it is likely that you will return to your local hospital.

Depending on your rehabilitation needs, we will refer you for therapy at your local hospital, at home or in a specialist neurological rehabilitation unit.

## Useful sources of information

### Headway

A brain injury association and registered charity that provides support to both the patient and family/carers of those with brain damage. A wide variety of information and fact sheets can be found on its website: [www.headway.org](http://www.headway.org) Tel: 0808 800 2244

### British Heart Foundation

The UK's number one heart charity. It provides up to date information about heart disease as well as conducting research into heart disease and its treatment. A variety of information leaflets can be found on its website: [www.bhf.org.uk](http://www.bhf.org.uk) Tel: 0300 330 3322

### DVLA

The DVLA website advises that anyone who has suffered a hypoxic brain injury must inform the DVLA. A variety of information and advice can be found on its website:

<https://www.gov.uk/hypoxic-brain-damage-and-driving>

**For more information leaflets on conditions, procedures, treatments and services offered at our hospitals, please visit [www.stgeorges.nhs.uk](http://www.stgeorges.nhs.uk)**

## Additional services

### Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

PALS can offer you on-the-spot advice and information when you have comments or concerns about our services or the care you have received. You can visit the PALS office between 9.30am and 4.30pm, Monday to Friday in the main corridor between Grosvenor and Lanesborough wings (near the lift foyer).

**Tel:** 020 8725 2453 **Email:** [pals@stgeorges.nhs.uk](mailto:pals@stgeorges.nhs.uk)

### NHS Choices

NHS Choices provides online information and guidance on all aspects of health and healthcare, to help you make decisions about your health.

**Web:** [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)

### NHS 111

You can call 111 when you need medical help fast but it's not a 999 emergency. NHS 111 is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Calls are free from landlines and mobile phones.

**Tel:** 111

### AccessAble

You can download accessibility guides for all of our services by searching 'St George's Hospital' on the AccessAble website ([www.accessable.co.uk](http://www.accessable.co.uk)). The guides are designed to ensure everyone – including those with accessibility needs – can access our hospital and community sites with confidence.



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