

FROM THE HEART

March 2022

NICHS Cardiac Support

A new hobby for spring

5 steps to wellbeing

Recipes and puzzles

Chest
Heart &
Stroke

75
YEARS
ON YOUR SIDE

Hello and welcome to our latest edition of From the Heart.

My name is Gillian Thompson and I am the Cardiac Head of Service at NICHHS. Cardiac Support services are the most recent addition to our Care services and I am delighted to share that this year will see the expansion of this department within NICHHS.

Our cardiac specific services offer emotional and practical support to anyone living with a heart condition. We do this one-to-one but also in group settings as we recognise just how important it is to link in with others who understand what you are going through. We offer education programmes to help people better understand their heart condition and we also support people to get moving and exercise safely. For me it is very exciting to see these services go from being an idea on paper to finally being open for the people of Northern Ireland to take part in. All the planning has paid off and there is a lot of excitement as we welcome new faces into our staff team and our services.

As we move into springtime, I hope it brings us all a feeling of new beginnings and a renewed energy and focus. Whether it be for our staff team as they start something new or for our service users who are starting their journey with us. For everyone change brings with it a lot of hope and good intentions but often it can also be tinged with a sense of uncertainty, discomfort or even fear. Change, no matter how positive, is not always a comfortable process but small changes eventually add up to big results. Every step forward is a step in the right direction, no matter how big or small that step is. Our dedicated Care team at NICHHS understand this entirely and will be by your side every step of the way.

Gillian Thompson
Head of Service
(Cardiac)



Cardiac Support Services

Meet our Co-ordinators:



Maeve O'Hagan



Suzanne Montgomery



Kyle Farley



Karen Smyth



Sarah Long



Stephanie Prince

We offer support to those living with a cardiac condition in a variety of different ways:



Family Support

Our Family Support Co-ordinators are here to help you and your family as you navigate life with a heart condition. We always take the time to listen and understand your particular set of circumstances, so we can offer the personalised advice and support that you need.

This support is both practical and emotional and there is no time limit to this service. Regardless of when you were diagnosed with a heart condition our Family Support team can help you to understand your condition better and help you to overcome any barriers you may be facing. We are on your side and just a phone call away.



Stay Strong Walking Groups

Our Stay Strong Walking Groups are open to anyone with a heart condition and are designed to take the fear out of exercising. We recognise that for many people post diagnosis regular exercise may be daunting, especially if it has not been part of your everyday life previously. Our team can support you with increasing your confidence to exercise.

Stay Strong Walking Group participants work at their own pace and we are confident that you will be surprised at how quickly you will make progress with our support.

We currently have walking groups in the following locations:

- Wallace Park, Lisburn
- Ward Park, Bangor
- Palace Stables, Armagh

Heart Strong Online

Delivered over 6 weeks, this online cardiac education programme brings together groups of individuals living across Northern Ireland who have been diagnosed with a heart condition. Together, they will benefit from a mix of information sharing and peer support that will help them to better understand their heart condition.

Heart Strong Online covers topics such as:

- Understanding your condition
- Emotions after diagnosis
- Physical activity
- Heart health
- Adopting healthier habits



Taking Control Self-Management Programme

This programme supports those living with a long-term chest, heart or stroke condition and covers topics such as healthy eating, getting a good night's sleep, breathing techniques, handling difficult emotions, weekly goal setting and much more. The aim of this programme is to assist participants to take control of their health and to improve quality of life.

If you are interested in any of our support services, you can contact our Co-ordinators or email heartsupportni@nichs.org.uk

A New You for Spring

TRY A NEW HOBBY!

Did you set yourself a New Year's resolution in January? Did you decide to take up a new hobby? Or maybe you decided to make more time for you? If not, entering springtime is the perfect time to start something new. A new hobby can be exciting, it can give you great satisfaction, help you connect with others or give you that well-deserved break from day-to-day stresses.

What makes walking a good hobby?

Walking can be one of the easiest hobbies to have. It is low impact, very accessible, can be easily fitted into your daily routine and can be done at your own pace. Walking also provides powerful health benefits such as lowering blood pressure and cholesterol whilst reducing your risk of heart disease, stroke and diabetes.

Walking offers so many things to so many people. Walking can help you meet others, make friendships and enjoy social connection. It can also give you alone time when you need it, a time to forget about life's worries and a time to live in the moment, enjoying the sights and sounds of your surroundings. We are fortunate to live in a beautiful part of the world and have hundreds of walks to choose from - check out the Walk NI website for some inspiration- walkni.com. But remember, you don't need to travel far - the beauty of walking is it can literally start on your doorstep!

How much walking should I do?

It is recommended that we complete 150 minutes of a moderate intensity activity per week. One way to achieve this is to break the time into smaller chunks e.g. 30 minutes of activity 5 days per week, or, 3 10-minute sessions throughout the day on 5 days of the week.

What is moderate activity? Moderate activity is something that raises your heart rate, makes you breathe a bit faster and makes you feel a bit warmer, but you should be able to hold a conversation. Walking is a great example of moderate activity as are water aerobics, housework and gardening.

Getting started

It is completely normal to worry about what you might or might not be able to do if you decide to give walking a try. Here are some top tips to help you get started:

- Wear comfortable footwear and clothing.
- Build your activity up gradually.
- Measure time, not distance. Count your active minutes as opposed to distance so you don't feel disappointed.
- Keep a diary – writing down your activity and duration can help you gauge your limits to avoid overdoing it.
- Join a walking group- walking in a group is a great way to start walking, make new friends and stay motivated. Don't forget, NICHs have walking groups throughout Northern Ireland, please contact your Co-ordinator for more information.



5 Steps to Wellbeing

With the stresses and strains of everyday life it can be hard to find the time to prioritise our wellbeing. Building the five steps below into your daily routine could help maintain and improve your wellbeing:



Connect

Connect with the people around you- with family, friends, colleagues and neighbours, at home, work or in your local community. Think of these as the cornerstones of your life and invest time in developing them. Building these connections will support and enrich you every day.



Be Active

Go for a walk or run, cycle, play a game, garden or dance – exercising makes you feel good. Most importantly, discover a physical activity you enjoy and that suits your level of mobility and fitness.



Take Notice

Be curious, catch sight of the beautiful, remark on the unusual, notice the changing seasons, savour the moment and be aware of the world around you and what you are feeling.



Keep Learning

Try something new, rediscover an old interest, sign up for that course or take on a different responsibility at work. Learning new things will make you more confident as well as being fun.



Give

Do something nice for a friend or a stranger. Thank someone, smile, volunteer your time, join a community group. Seeing yourself and your happiness as linked to the wider community can be incredibly rewarding and creates connections with the people around you.

Mum and Son's New Hobby Raises Over £6,000 for NI Chest Heart & Stroke!

Like many people during lockdown, Pam Gillies from Jordanstown found a new hobby in running. Pam says; "Before the first lockdown, I found it hard to get the time to exercise between working full-time and managing a busy family life. Being at home and not having to commute or do the school run with my three boys, provided me with the perfect opportunity to try something that I always wanted to do but previously never had time for – running! I started the Couch to 5K programme and was instantly hooked - even the boys started to come out running with me."

When her son Ollie, 13, asked if she would like to take on a 5K run a day challenge throughout the month of January, Pam automatically said yes.

It wasn't until a few days into the challenge that the duo decided to raise money for charity as Pam explains; "When we were running on Day 5, Ollie said we should be using our running to fundraise for a good cause. We automatically decided upon Northern Ireland Chest Heart & Stroke because a few years ago, my brother Paul, suddenly passed away from a heart attack. He was just 53."

"Also, I am a Director within the Accountancy Firm, BDO Northern Ireland and at the end of last year we began a two-year corporate partnership with NICHS to help support their work. This, along with what happened to Paul, made the charity the natural choice for our fundraising."

Come rain or shine, snow or ice, Pam and Ollie put their trainers on and ran 5K every day in January. Finishing the challenge on 31st January was particularly poignant for the pair as the following day, 1st February, marked three years since the sudden passing of Paul.

Pam explains; "Paul's death came totally out of the blue, so

it was a terrible shock. I am now very aware of the importance of heart health and I encourage the kids to be aware of this too and of how being active and making healthy choices can really help."

Fidelma Carter, Head of Public Health at NICHS says; "Pam's brother Paul's passing from a heart attack is deeply sad. Unfortunately, a lot of people don't realise they are actually having a heart attack and the signs and symptoms are more varied than you would think. We therefore urge people to remember the acronym STOP - if you notice yourself or someone else presenting with any of these symptoms, don't wait, call an ambulance immediately."

The STOP acronym stands for:

S

S - Something's not right – symptoms can start slowly

T

T - Tightness or pain in the chest, pain in the arm, neck or jaw

O

O - Other symptoms such as shortness of breath, nausea or sweating

P

P - Phone 999 immediately.



Pam and Ollie's efforts have seen them raise an amazing £6,325 for NICHS! Pam says; "We didn't start out with a specific fundraising target, but people really got behind us which was amazing, and we are delighted to be able to give the charity such a substantial amount. The support of the local community when we were out running was great too, with people cheering us on, joining us for some of the runs and honking their car horns in encouragement."

The challenge hasn't just benefitted NICHS however, as Ollie explains; "Doing the challenge has helped me get fitter and I feel better. I am faster on the rugby pitch and my stamina has improved a lot. It was fun doing the challenge with my mum."

For Pam, the challenge meant more time with Ollie; "The time I spent with Ollie running was priceless. I got 30-40 minutes every day with him when we weren't busy doing other things. I felt a bit sad once we finished the challenge because it was lovely to spend that time together."

Jackie Trainor, Director of Income Generation at NICHS says; "We are very thankful to Pam and Ollie for completing this challenge and raising a fantastic sum of money in support of our charity- what an achievement!"

"Today, there are over 335,000 people living with a chest, heart or stroke condition in Northern Ireland - that's one in five of the population. Nearly 90% of NICHS's care and

prevention services and research projects are funded exclusively by donations so fundraising efforts like Pam's and Ollie's, as well as corporate support like that from BDO Northern Ireland, are vital for our charity and what we can achieve. The money raised by our supporters enables us to continue to help the local community and provide life-changing services for people living with chest, heart and stroke conditions and their families."



RECIPES



With the arrival of the new season, it is the perfect time to try something new in the kitchen! Below, our Care Co-ordinator Beth has shared some of her tried and tested classics as well as some recent additions to her recipe book.

The brown onion and celery soup recipes are family favourites in Beth's house but Beth also loves to experiment and try something new. Pithivier (pronounced pit-hiv-e-air), is a traditional French pastry made from a puff pastry parcel filled with almond paste and served as a dessert. Beth has shared her savoury twist on this classic with a version filled with salmon and dill.



Brown Onion Soup

- 4 large onions
- 10g flour
- 25g butter
- 1 litre stock
- 50g grated cheese
- Two slices of brown bread

Peel the onions, halve and slice finely. Melt the butter, add the onions and cook over a good heat until cooked and well browned.

Mix in the flour and cook over a gentle heat, browning slightly.

Gradually mix in the stock, bring to the boil, skim and season. Simmer for approximately 10 minutes until the onions are soft. Serve in individual dishes.

Using a cutter, cut the bread into little flutes and toast on both sides. Sprinkle with cheese and place on top of the soup. Place under the grill, brown, then serve.

Celery Soup

- 15g butter
- ½ tbsp olive oil
- 400g celery
- 1 large onion
- 2 large potatoes
- 750ml vegetable stock
- 100ml single cream

Chop the celery and onion finely, add to the pan with melted butter and oil. Soften for 5 minutes.

Peel and chop the potatoes into small cubes. Add the stock and cubed potatoes to the celery and simmer for 20 minutes.

Remove from heat and blend until smooth. Add the cream, mix well, season and serve.

FACT - Celery is low in calories and high in vitamin C.



Salmon and Dill Pithivier

- 300g salmon, diced into bite sized pieces
- 250g ready-made light puff pastry
- 1 egg, lightly beaten
- 1 tsp English mustard
- Handful of fresh spinach
- Handful of chopped fresh dill

Preheat the oven to 180°C/Gas 4. Mix the dill and salmon together in a bowl.

Roll out the pastry to approx. 4mm thick. Cut out 8 circles using a 2 ½ inch cookie cutter.

Cut out 4 squares of baking parchment slightly bigger than the pastry circles. Place a pastry circle on each square.

Put ¼ tsp of mustard on each pastry circle and spread. Place a quarter of the salmon and dill mix on top of each of the circles and add some spinach on top.

Glaze the edge of the circle and place a second pastry disc on top, covering the filling. Seal the pastry at the glazed edges using a fork to squeeze the edges together. Using a sharp knife score a spiral pattern on the top of each pithivier. Glaze.

Bake in a preheated oven for 15 -20 minutes until golden brown. Serve with green vegetables or salad.

Pepper and Brie Loaf

- 200g self-raising flour
- 1 tsp baking powder
- 4 eggs
- 200ml milk
- 75ml olive oil
- 1 red pepper, chopped
- 150g brie cheese, chopped
- 1 tsp dried oregano



Mix the flour, baking powder, oregano and chopped pepper together. Add the chopped brie then mix in the eggs, oil and milk and combine. Put the mixture into a lined, greased loaf tin.

Preheat the oven to 400°F/210°C and bake for 40 minutes.

Tip - This loaf is delicious served with soup or salad.



SPRING FLOWER QUIZ

1. A proper rose.

2. A woman's name.

3. Symbol of an English war.

4. Parting words.

5. A white winter flower.

6. Yellow flower subjects of a poem.

7. Someone who is never asked to dance.

8. A Scottish girls name.

9. Part of the face.

10. Pleasant Bill.

11. A self-centred blossom.

PUZZLES

Something New Word Search



Q	H	C	Z	S	V	J	F	N	U	F	A	G	I	N
S	M	I	L	E	S	R	L	P	X	R	L	H	C	Q
H	U	G	S	K	A	S	O	R	V	I	G	M	O	F
X	P	U	H	D	Y	U	W	M	I	E	K	D	M	Y
A	T	R	E	S	T	P	E	U	Z	N	P	B	P	A
H	E	A	L	T	H	P	R	S	O	D	Z	D	L	R
M	I	L	W	N	R	O	S	I	H	S	C	D	I	L
O	O	O	M	E	S	R	W	C	S	I	N	G	M	O
M	W	A	T	E	R	T	F	A	L	F	W	P	E	V
Q	M	G	M	E	X	E	R	C	I	S	E	E	N	E
R	R	X	Q	F	O	O	D	U	Y	J	E	T	T	N
E	S	U	N	S	H	I	N	E	L	W	Y	S	M	L
A	X	X	D	I	K	D	C	O	N	N	E	C	T	C
D	I	W	F	F	A	M	I	L	Y	W	I	G	W	W
G	X	G	W	L	A	U	G	H	T	E	R	G	S	F

**FOOD
COMPLIMENT
SUPPORT
LAUGHTER
REST**

**EXERCISE
SMILES
MUSIC
SING
HUGS**

**WATER
FLOWERS
HEALTH
CONNECT
LOVE**

**PETS
FAMILY
READ
SUNSHINE
FRIENDS**



A New Look for NICHS

Many of you will remember during our face-to-face activities, staff members dressed in white shirts featuring our logo, reminding all services users that we are always 'on your side'. We've decided it's time for a revamp however and will soon be introducing a new uniform. Make sure to keep an eye out in the coming months for your Co-ordinators modelling our new look!

Stroke Wellness Sessions

At NICHS we recognise that living with a long-term condition can impact both mental and physical wellbeing. Our Stroke Wellness Sessions focus on mental health and wellbeing, physical activity, peer support and connection, other relevant information (e.g. scams, home safety) and not forgetting that well deserved cup of tea. The feedback we have received from group members has been very encouraging:

“ The wellness sessions are extremely informative; I am able to learn new things at every session.” - Finbar

“ The wellness sessions are very welcoming. The sessions are informative and provide a great support to help with one's emotional wellbeing.” - John

NICHS is here to support and help you because we are always on your side! If you are thinking about joining a local Stroke Wellness Session and need



further help or advice, please contact your Co-ordinator or Noelene Hughes (07764211536) for more information.

Quiz Answers:

1. Primrose, 2. Iris, 3. Rose, 4. Forget-me-not, 5. Snowdrop, 6. Daffodil, 7. Wallflower, 8. Heather, 9. Tulips, 10. Sweet William, 11. Narcissus

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