

Patient Advice Sheet

Home diuretic service – Subcutaneous Furosemide

People with heart failure can get extra fluid (water) because the heart is not pumping properly. This fluid (water) can be in the lungs which makes you feel short of breath. It can also be in your legs or abdomen (around your tummy area) which causes swelling and can be uncomfortable. Medicines called diuretics (often called water tablets) work on the kidneys causing you to pass more urine (wee) so your body can get rid of this extra fluid. The usual diuretics given are called furosemide and bumetanide.

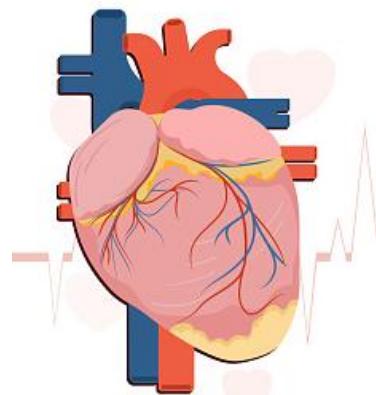
Sometimes the tablets don't get rid of the extra fluid - even if we increase the dose. If this is the case, we can give the medicine by injection instead. It will be given subcutaneously – this is when a cannula is placed under the skin. It can be inserted in different places such as the abdomen (tummy area) or arm and the diuretic is given by a small machine over 24 hours. Blood tests will be done as needed and a healthcare professional will visit to check on you at home.

What are the advantages of having this treatment at home?

The main advantage of this treatment is that it can be given to try and stop you having to go to hospital or if you are in hospital already, you can go home sooner.

What are the disadvantages of having this treatment at home?

When you are in hospital there are doctors and nurses available 24 hours a day. At home you will not be checked as often as you would be in hospital, and your family member or carer may need to be at home to help look after you.



What are the side effects?

The most common problems are:

- Dizziness on standing due a drop in blood pressure (postural hypotension). If this does happen, then the dose may need to be reduced and sometimes your other tablets may need to be changed.
- Passing more urine (weeing more). If the diuretics work, you may need to go to the toilet more than usual. You need to be able to get to the toilet/commode easily or have a urine bottle close to hand. If you find it difficult to get out of bed, then a catheter may be needed (a tube inserted into the bladder) to make it easier for you.
- Changes in your kidney function. Diuretics can affect your kidneys so regular blood tests may be needed so that we can check how your kidneys are coping and adapt your treatment if needed.
- Soreness, redness or swelling near the cannula. The area around the cannula will be checked by the nurse every time the infusion is set up and when it has finished. If any soreness develops the cannula can be changed to a different part of your body. If there are any signs of infection you may need an antibiotic.
- Gout may occur with higher doses of any diuretics.
- There is a small risk of hearing disorders and tinnitus (ringing in the ear). Although this is rare, deafness may occur which may not always be reversible.

What if it does not work?

If that happens then the team will discuss your wishes and explain what else can be tried. You may need to go into hospital for more treatment or you may decide to stay at home. You may have already completed an advance care plan stating what you would like for care and the team can discuss this with you.

Who provides this service?

This service is run by the hospital at home (virtual ward) team. This is a group of health care professionals comprising of doctors and advanced care practitioners (including nurses) who specialise in providing care in the home.

What if there is a problem (harm, risks, complaints procedure)?

If you suffer any side effects, then the treatment will be reviewed and possibly stopped. The treatment can also be stopped at any time at your request.

You will be given contact numbers for the team involved in your care, including out of hours contact numbers. If you have questions or concerns regarding your treatment and care, please speak to one of the nurses who will do their best to answer your questions. You can also contact the following people for further information and advice.

Contact Name and Number:

Please remember that this leaflet is intended as general information only. We aim to make the information as up to date and accurate as possible, but please note that it is subject to change. Please therefore always check specific advice on any concerns you may have with your doctor.

How can I help reduce healthcare associated infections?

Infection prevention & control is important to the well-being of our patients and for that reason we have infection prevention & control procedures in place. Keeping your hands clean is an effective way of preventing the spread of infections. Please follow our infection prevention and control guidelines when visiting our healthcare sites. Further information is available on our website.

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If you would like a copy of this information on audiotape, **in large print** or translated, please call the Patient Advice Liaison Service on 01296 831120 or email bht.pals@nhs.net