



your
**SURGICAL
PATHWAY**



Joint cardiac conference

- The joint cardiac conference is a meeting with all the members of the multidisciplinary team. Your consultant cardiologists and the cardiac surgeons will look at the results of investigations you have had.
- You may have had the following types of investigation: Electrocardiogram (ECG), echocardiogram (echo) scan, cardiac MRI (magnetic resonance imaging), cardiac catheter or exercise test results. These take place in The Bristol Heart Institute or University Hospital of Wales, Cardiff.
- They will discuss the best surgical procedure to repair your cardiac condition.
- The cardiac anaesthetist will give advice if needed, for example if you have asthma, a problem with your lungs or an unusual shaped chest.
- Any additional support which you may need during your admission will be considered and discussed.
- When a final plan is agreed on, a formal letter will be written to the surgeon and your name will be added to the waiting list.

This surgical pathway tells you more about what happens when you have cardiac surgery. Your team may first talk to you about this in your local clinic and then refer you to

The Bristol Heart Institute, which is the specialist centre for adult congenital cardiac surgery in South Wales and the South West.



Attending the surgical clinic to meet the surgeon

- You will receive an appointment to meet your cardiac surgeon. There are three congenital surgeons who operate on adults born with heart conditions.
- The surgeon will explain your heart condition to you and explain how it can be repaired. Diagrams or picture may be used to help with this. The post-operative recovery will be explained and the risks of surgery will be discussed.
- You may be asked to sign your consent at this appointment or this may be done the night before your operation.



Following your surgical appointment

- You will receive a letter summarising your meeting with the surgeon and a copy will go to your GP. A copy will also go to your referring cardiologist, if you are seen in one of the peripheral or outreach clinics.
- When there is a date for surgery you will receive a letter inviting you to come to pre-assessment at The Bristol Heart Institute.



PRE ADMISSIONS CLINIC

Attending the pre-admissions clinic

- Your pre-assessment appointment will take about two to three hours, as you may need further tests. The clinical nurse specialist will take your medical history, ask about your medication and you will have a brief examination.
- A number of tests will be required so the team has up-to-date information when you go for your operation.
- The nurse specialist will review all the test results the following day and he/she will call you if there are any issues with the results. Some changes to your medication may be required, such as stopping certain drugs, which you will be advised about.

CARDIAC WARD

Admission to the cardiac ward on the day before your operation

- You will be asked to attend the Bristol Heart Institute outpatients for a pre-operative meeting with an anaesthetist.
- You may discuss and sign your consent with one of the surgical team at this appointment, if this was not done when you met the surgeon.
- On the morning of the procedure you will be prepared for theatre, you will have a shower with antiseptic skin wash and put on your hospital gown.
- You may be given some sedation to help you relax.



Admission to the Cardiac Intensive Care Unit

- When you are admitted to the Intensive Care Unit you will be attached to a number of drips and drains, and have an oxygen mask. This is routine for everyone who has cardiac surgery. You will be attached to the cardiac monitor so the team can see how you are progressing.
- You will be given the medication you need, including painkillers to keep you comfortable.
- When you are clinically stable the equipment will be removed.
- You will be moved out of the Intensive Care Unit and will be helped to sit out of bed as soon as you are well enough.



Transfer to the High Dependency Unit

- In the high dependency area you will continue to be attached to a monitor, have regular blood tests, ECG and echo scans to monitor your progress.
- You will be transferred to the ward when the Doctors are satisfied everything is stable and there is a bed available.



CARDIAC WARD

Transfer to the Cardiac Ward

- By the time you are on the ward, you will be walking around your bed space area and starting to do some physiotherapy.
- You will be eating and drinking and your appetite will slowly return to normal.
- You will be helped into the shower and you can get dressed.
- On average people go home 6-7 days after their operation. If it is longer your stay is likely to be slightly longer.



Before you go home

- You will be given advice about your recovery and medication.
- Your follow-up appointment will be in 4 weeks in Bristol.
- If you attend one of our outreach clinics you will be discharged from the Bristol Heart Institute after your first post-operative appointment and your next follow-up will be with your local cardiologist.
- A letter will be written to summarise the care you have had in the Bristol Heart Institute and the plan for your ongoing care. You will be seen ongoing by your local cardiologist or back at the Bristol Heart Institute at an appropriate time, depending on your progress.

THE INVESTIGATIONS

- ECG - An **electrocardiogram (ECG)** is a test which measures the electrical activity of your heart to show whether or not it is working normally. An ECG records the heart's rhythm and activity on a moving strip of paper or a line on a screen
- Echo - An **echocardiogram** uses sound waves to create pictures of your heart's chambers, valves, walls and the blood vessels (aorta, arteries, veins) attached to your heart. A probe called a transducer is passed over your chest. The probe produces sound waves that bounce off your heart and "echo" back to the probe. These waves are changed into pictures viewed on a video monitor
- Bloods - **Blood tests** can be used in a number of ways, such as helping to diagnose a condition and assessing cardiac function.
- Cardiac MRI - **Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI)** is a way of creating detailed images of your internal organs, such as your heart and blood vessels.
- Exercise testing - An **exercise ECG** is an electrocardiogram (ECG) that is recorded while you are walking on a treadmill or cycling on an exercise bike. The aim of the test is to see how your heart works when you are more active.