

## **Acute Myocardial Infarction (MI or Heart Attack)**

### **Getting Ready to Learn about Myocardial Infarction (also known as a MI or heart attack)**

Learning something new can be hard. It is even harder if you are not feeling well. The purpose of this education plan is for you and the staff to review this information together. Here are some good things to tell the staff:

- Who you want to learn with you. We would like to have someone who will be helping you at home learn with you.
- The best way for you to learn. Do you learn best by reading a book or pamphlet, or by doing things yourself?
- If you are not feeling well, if you are in pain or you cannot focus on learning right now.

This information is important to your health. We may explain something more than once. We will be giving you information in small bits over several days. If there is something you don't understand **its okay to ask** us to explain.

### **What I Need to Learn about Myocardial Infarction (MI or heart attack)**

By the time I leave the hospital I will be able to tell the staff:

1. What is an Acute Myocardial Infarction (MI or heart attack)
2. The symptoms of a heart attack
3. The causes and risk factors for a heart attack
4. How I will take care of myself at home
5. When I need to call for help right away and when I will call the doctor for information or care

**The staff will use three questions to teach me about heart attack:**

1. What is my main problem?
2. What do I need to do?

### 3. Why is this important to me?

The staff will ask me to repeat back important points in my own words, or ask me to show what I have learned. They want to make sure that I know about my disease and how to take care of myself.

#### **What is my main problem?**

I have had a Myocardial Infarction (MI or heart attack). This happens when blood flow to a part of the heart is blocked. A heart attack may come on suddenly or over several hours. It can be caused by:

- Narrowing of the arteries or blood vessels in the heart
- Spasm or tightening of the blood vessels in the heart
- A blood clot in the arteries in the heart

#### **What do I need to do?**

I will be able to tell the staff the symptoms of a heart attack.

- The most common sign of a heart attack is chest pain or pressure. The pain or pressure may be mild or very bad. It may feel crushing, tight, squeezing or heavy. This usually happens during exercise, emotional stress, in cold weather or after eating a heavy meal.
- Other symptoms of a heart attack include:
  - Discomfort or pain that spreads to the neck, jaw, shoulders, back or left arm
  - Feelings of indigestion or stomach pain
  - Nausea or feeling “sick to my stomach”
  - Vomiting
  - Burning feeling under the breastbone in the upper chest
  - Trouble breathing or feeling short of breath
  - Feeling lightheaded, weak or faint
  - Sweating
  - Skin that is pale, cold, sweaty or clammy
  - Feeling anxious or having a sense of panic or doom for no reason

I will be able to tell the staff the causes and risks for heart attack

A heart attack may be caused when:

- Plaque or fatty build-up blocks a blood vessel.
- A clot forms and blocks the flow of blood to the heart.
- The heart muscle needs more oxygen than the blood vessels can give. This might happen during hard exercise such as shoveling snow, or with a sudden increase in blood pressure or emotional stress.
- Heart vessels spasm. These spasms are sudden and temporary narrowing of a small part of an artery that supplies blood to the heart. These may be caused by smoking or drugs such as cocaine.

Risk factors include:

- Diabetes
- High blood cholesterol or having too much fat in my diet
- High blood pressure
- Smoking now or in the past, or being exposed to cigarette smoke regularly
- Poor circulation in other areas of the body such as the legs
- Having a stroke in the past
- Family history of heart problems
- Being overweight
- Being male
- Being over 55 years old
- Being a female who smokes and takes birth control pills or who has gone through the “change of life” (menopause)
- Lack of exercise
- Stress
- Use of stimulant drugs such as cocaine

I will be able to tell the staff how I will take care of myself at home.

- My doctor will tell me what limits I have. I may have to limit my driving, working or lifting while my heart heals.
- If I smoke I will try to quit. I will receive information on how to quit.

- If I am at a healthy weight, I should stay at that weight.
- If I am overweight, I can ask my doctor or dietitian what a healthy weight is for me. I can ask for a referral to a dietitian to get help controlling my weight.
- Food and drugs together
  - Sometimes food affects how my medicine works. I will ask a pharmacist if I have questions about the foods I eat and my medicine.
- Limit the amount of alcohol I drink.
  - Women should drink no more than one drink a day.
  - Men should drink no more than two drinks a day.
  - One drink is 12 ounces (oz.) of beer, 5 oz. of wine, or 1½ oz. of liquor.
- Exercise as directed
  - My doctor may order cardiac rehab for me. Cardiac rehabilitation will help strengthen my heart muscle and lower my blood pressure. I will start slowly and do more as I get stronger.
  - My doctor will tell me what exercise is best for me. If an activity makes my symptoms worse I will stop and call my doctor.
  - Exercise will help keep me at a healthy weight.
- Manage stress
  - Accept that I have a heart problem
  - Know that my family or I may feel sad, angry, or afraid.
  - Share my feelings with others
  - My doctor can refer me to someone who can help me limit my stress or handle the emotions I may be feeling.
  - Tell my doctor if I feel depressed.
- Follow a heart healthy diet
  - Limit total fat intake to less than 50 to 75 grams per day. Limit saturated fat and trans fats to less than 15 to 18 grams per day.
    - Choose lean meats. Remove fat and skin from chicken and turkey.
    - Avoid high fat meats such as bacon and sausage.
    - Use low-fat or fat-free milk, cheese and yogurt.

- Use reduced-fat, whipped, or liquid vegetable spreads in place of stick margarine, butter or shortening.
- Bake, boil or broil foods. Do not fry.
- Limit cholesterol intake to less than 200 milligrams per day.
  - Use egg substitute products in place of eggs.
  - Choose lean meats. Remove fat and skin from chicken and turkey.
  - Use low-fat or fat-free milk, cheese and yogurt.
  - Use vegetable fats and oils instead of butter or animal fat.
- Eat foods with heart-healthy fats (omega-3 fat)
  - Eat salmon, tuna, mackerel twice a week.
  - Walnuts, canola and soybean oil.
- Eat foods that are high in fiber. My goal for fiber intake is 20 to 35 grams per day. Foods high in fiber include:
  - Fresh fruits and vegetables, 5 servings every day.
  - Foods made from whole grains, 3 servings every day.
  - Dried beans and lentils.
- If I have high blood pressure, I should:
  - Limit the amount of sodium in my diet to 2000 to 2400 milligrams per day.
    - Read food labels for sodium content. Avoid or limit foods with more than 300 mg of sodium in a serving.
    - Do not add salt to foods when I cook or at the table.
    - When eating at a restaurant, choose foods that are naturally low in sodium. Ask the server for information about menu items that have little or no added salt.
  - Include foods that are rich in potassium in my diet.
    - Eat at least 5 servings of fruits and vegetables.
    - Eat low-fat or fat-free dairy foods (milk, yogurt, cheese) to give me calcium and potassium.
    - Choose breads, cereals and pastas made from whole grains.
  - If I have questions about diet, I can ask my doctor to refer me to a dietitian. I can schedule an appointment

with a Bronson dietitian by calling 269-341-6860. A dietitian can give me more information about how I can:

- Eat foods that help me maintain a healthy weight for me.
- Eat foods that help keep my heart healthy.
- Eat foods that help control my blood pressure.

I will be able to tell the staff when I need to call for help right away and when I will call the doctor for information or follow up.

- If I have symptoms of another heart attack, I will call “911”. I will not drive.
- I will call my doctor if I:
  - have a rash or hives
  - think I may be allergic to the medicines
  - have an irregular or rapid heartbeat
  - have trouble breathing
  - have questions about my condition or my treatment
  - need to make another appointment
  - think my medicines are not helping
  - have questions about my medicine

### **Why is this important to me?**

- Having a heart attack is a life-changing event for my family and me.
- If I have symptoms of another heart attack it is important to get treatment as soon as possible.
- The goal of my treatment is to prevent heart damage and make my life as normal as possible.

As part of my care I have received this education plan. I may also receive:

- Information about medicines I am taking.

## Acute Myocardial Infarction Education Plan

### Resources for Staff

- [The Lippincott Manual of Nursing Practice, 10th edition](#)- Acute Myocardial Infarction

### Teaching Tools (Items given to the patient)

- Acute Myocardial Infarction Education Plan

### References:

- [The Lippincott Manual of Nursing Practice, 10th edition](#)

Always close each teaching session with the question, “What questions do you have for me?”

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