



an information guide for people  
with long-term illnesses

## Your health, Your way ... vascular disease

This booklet is aimed at people with vascular disease, a long-term condition, which means you will have to live with it for the rest of your life. While there is no cure, it can be managed so that it is less likely to dominate and control your life. There is plenty that can be done to stabilise your condition and improve your quality of life.

Living with a long-term condition can sometimes be difficult to manage day to day. So it's important you get the right information and the right help at the right time.

If you understand what vascular disease is and its treatment, you'll feel more confident. You'll be able to take better care of yourself and manage your condition; you'll be better equipped to make informed choices and decisions about your care.

So it's important to have good, reliable information about the local services available to you. Wrong or misleading information can do more harm than good. It can confuse and scare you, raise false hopes and even damage your health further.

This booklet is aimed to help you, the people around you, including family and friends, in these difficult times. It will guide you in the right direction - show you where you can get local help, support, services and information. It won't give you the answers to all your questions, but it will show you where and how to get those answers.

It is designed to point you in the right direction to find out more about your condition, your treatment, how to live with it and manage it, how to get involved with local support groups if you want to; who to turn to when you need help and support, and who to talk to if you want to discuss things with people who know what you are going through.

## Your condition ... vascular disease

Vascular disease is a disease of the blood vessels – the tubes that carry blood to every part of the body.

It's caused when your blood vessels get 'furred' or clogged up by a build up of fatty deposits – a bit like a pipe getting blocked. They get narrow and lose their elasticity, which reduces the amount of blood flowing through them, leading to poor circulation.

The fat sticks to the sides of your blood vessels, making the pipe smaller and harder for the blood to get around your body and do the job it's supposed to do, carrying oxygen and nutrients to the body from the heart.

If the blood supply is cut off, it can lead to heart failure or heart attacks, stroke, brain damage, angina (pains in the chest caused because the heart isn't getting enough oxygen), kidney failure, dementia or damage to the limbs because they're starved of blood. Occasionally, arteries also become weak and start to dilate, causing formation of an aneurysm.

The most important thing is to stop it getting worse. This is where you come in. Your health team will help you prepare your own self care plan to help you manage your illness.

Medicines can't cure furred-up or blocked blood vessels or make them regain their elasticity. The aim is to stop the condition getting worse.

But there are some medicines that can reduce the amount of fatty tissues deposited in the arteries and slow the progression of the disease; and medicines such as low-dose aspirin can prevent blood clots.

There is much you can do as part of your self-management plan to help improve the situation, such as daily exercise which will help by encouraging the circulation. A low-fat diet that contains antioxidant

vitamins C and E should be adopted - eating five portions of fruit and vegetables each day will help. Problems such as high cholesterol, high blood pressure or diabetes must be managed so the risk of further damage to the arteries is reduced.

When the narrowing is more extensive and involves more than one part of the artery, it may need to be bypassed. This is done by grafting a vein from the leg or a synthetic material designed specially for this purpose.

## Where can I find out more?

The **Circulation Foundation** is a research charity dedicated to the prevention and treatment of vascular disease and provides support and vital information to those who are affected by vascular disease.

They currently publish 22 patient information leaflets on a variety of vascular problems. More information is available on the website at **[www.circulationfoundation.org.uk](http://www.circulationfoundation.org.uk)** or contact the Foundation at **020 7304 4779**; fax 020 7430 9235 or **email: [info@circulationfoundation.org.uk](mailto:info@circulationfoundation.org.uk)**

**The British Heart Foundation:** Information and advice on heart health and related support, including details of local groups; **0845 072 6666** or see the web site **[www.bhf.org.uk](http://www.bhf.org.uk)**

Leicester branch: 16-20 Silver St LE1 5ET **tel: 0116 262 8267**

Coalville: 28 New Broadway LE67 3XA **tel: 01530 813162**

Loughborough: 18 Market Place LE11 3EA **tel: 01509 268205**

Hinckley: 58 Castle St, LE10 1DD **tel: 01455 251596**

Melton Mowbray: 30 Market Place LE13 1XD **tel: 01664 482899**

Market Harborough: 1 High St LE16 7NJ **tel: 01858 431317**

**Lindsay Leg Clubs** were established to help patients manage leg conditions, usually brought about by vascular disease. Any problems involving legs, from varicose veins, skin tears, eczema and leg ulcers to difficulties in walking caused by vascular disease. For many people suffering with swollen legs or leg ulcers the main problems are associated with pain, infection, wound leakage, immobility, loneliness and isolation.

**Oadby and Wigston Leg Club** meets at **Oadby United Reformed Church** (URC) Hall, Rosemead Drive, Oadby, Leicester, LE2 5SF, **tel: 0116 278 5022**, Tuesdays 9.00 to 11.30am. More information is available at the Lindsay Leg Club website, at **[www.legclub.org](http://www.legclub.org)** or at The Lindsay Leg Club Foundation, PO Box 689, Ipswich, IP1 9BN **tel: 01473 749565** or **email: [ellie@legclub.org](mailto:ellie@legclub.org)**

## Living with your condition

Taking steps to reduce your risk factors can slow the development of both fatty deposits in your blood vessels and vascular disease.

You may have to make significant lifestyle changes. You will need to prepare your own self-care management plan. Your health team will help you with this.

Diet is an important factor. The role of fat intake effecting your blood vessels is now clear – the more fat you eat, the more your blood vessels could become clogged. Steps to tackle this include changing behaviour, more physical activity, and changing diet, including reducing salt, increasing dietary fibre and eating enough fresh fruit and vegetables.

- You should eat a varied and healthy diet with plenty of leafy vegetables. Avoid sugary foods and saturated fats found in red meat and full-fat dairy products.
- Stop smoking.
- Lose weight if you are overweight.
- Exercise more: aim for a half-hour walk each day.

Make sure you have your own care plan – your health team will help you develop **your** own self-management scheme.

## YOUR care plan

If the doctor has just told you that you have a long term condition, it can be both daunting and frightening.

But you are not on your own. As well as your health teams, there are charities, support groups, and even internet blogs and meetings where you can talk to people in the same situation as you.

Your health team is there to give you support, help and treatment – however you can make choices and decisions that affect your condition and it's important that you develop your own personal care plan to help you manage it. Your health team will help you with this, but there are certain things you might want to do as well.

**Your feelings:** Most people feel overwhelmed when they are told that they have a long term illness. People experience many different emotions, which can cause confusion and frequent mood swings. These emotions are part of the process that many people go through in dealing with their illness. You may find it helpful to talk to your GP, a counsellor or a member of your medical team, who can help you.

**Lifestyle:** Changing your lifestyle can help manage and control your condition. Local help is available to support you:-

**Giving up smoking:** Both NHS Leicester city and NHS Leicestershire County and Rutland have dedicated teams to help you give up smoking through one-to-one advice, clinics, personal advice and nicotine patches and replacements. The City **STOP!** Team can be contacted on **0116 295 4141**, and the County and Rutland team on **0845 045 2828**.

**Healthy Weight, Healthy Life:** maintaining a healthy weight can have a major impact on your health. Being overweight can increase your risk of raised blood pressure, diabetes and heart disease while being significantly underweight can impact on your immune system.

The **Leicestershire Nutrition and Dietetic service** has a team of dietitians who work in a variety of clinical specialties and can help you make informed choices about the food you eat. You can access general healthy eating advice and condition specific advice via their website at **[www.lnds.nhs.uk](http://www.lnds.nhs.uk)**. If appropriate your GP or practice nurse can refer you to a dietician working in your area.

**Keeping Active:** Regular physical activity can help and also reduces the risk of other serious conditions, such as heart disease and stroke. Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland has a wide range of activities available such as gentle aerobics, cycling, salsa, walking and yoga. Every level of fitness is catered for, with help and advice readily available. Each district or borough has its own physical co-ordinator who provides advice on what's available in your area. Whether you are new exerciser; returning after a long time off; or a regular exerciser, all different abilities are catered for.

For more details, go to the Leicester-Shire and Rutland Sport website, **[www.lrsport.org.uk](http://www.lrsport.org.uk)** or telephone your local co-ordinator on:

Hinckley and Bosworth **tel: 01455 255875**

North West Leicestershire **tel: 01530 454830**

Charnwood **tel: 01509 634836**

Melton **tel: 01664 502389**

Harborough **tel: 01858 821284**

Blaby **tel: 0116 272 7704**

Oadby and Wigston **tel: 0116 257 2672**

Rutland **tel: 01572 720936**

Leicester **tel: 0116 252 7350**

**Fit and Active Buddies (FAB) Project** – personal trainers and cut price gym sessions to help people lose weight in Braunstone, Beaumont Leys, New Parks and Belgrave. **tel: 0778 538 5911**

**Walking:** **[www.leicester.gov.uk/walking](http://www.leicester.gov.uk/walking)**

**City Sport:** [www.leicester.gov.uk/sports](http://www.leicester.gov.uk/sports) for a variety of sport and leisure activities to suit all.

**Talking to others:** Meeting and talking with other people who are, or have been, in a similar situation can be both reassuring and helpful. Details of local and national support and help groups can be found on the websites detailed in this directory.

Support groups are also listed on the Leicestershire **'Infolinx'** website, a community information website run by the nine county and local councils, detailing more than 5,000 clubs, societies, organisations and self help groups based in the region. It can be reached at [infolinx.leics.gov](http://infolinx.leics.gov).

## Getting the most from your medicines

Around half of patients with a long-term condition do not take their medicines as prescribed. However, for patients to take real control of their conditions, they need fast and convenient access to medicines, involvement in decisions about those medicines, advice about how to take them and information on any side effects which they may suffer.

Pharmacists have an increasing role as a source of advice for patients and their carers. There are more than 200 pharmacists throughout Leicester city, Leicestershire and Rutland who are available to help with advice and information.

Refer to the NHS Choices website at [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk), or talk to **NHS Direct** on **0845 46 47** for details of your nearest pharmacist.

## Need help or advice?

The **Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)** is a free, confidential and individual service where you or your carers can be advised about the NHS, or voice your concerns about either your own or a relative's treatment. It aims to help solve any problems, concerns or questions you have when using health services in the area - a customer care service for your local NHS. PALS:

- Provides advice and support to patients, their families and carers
- Provides information on NHS services and local support groups
- Listens to your concerns, suggestions, queries or compliments
- Gives advice on how to make a complaint
- Helps sort out health concerns on your behalf
- Provides information on how you can get more involved in developing NHS services

You can contact a member of the PALS team in person, by telephone, email or letter. Patients and members of the public can meet PALS staff by arrangement.

**NHS Leicester City PALS tel: 0116 295 7011** (Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm. Outside hours please leave a message and PALS will call you). **email: [pals@leicestercity.nhs.uk](mailto:pals@leicestercity.nhs.uk)**

**NHS Leicestershire County and Rutland PALS tel: 01455 441971**  
or **01509 564444**. **email: [pals@lcr.nhs.uk](mailto:pals@lcr.nhs.uk)**

**University Hospitals of Leicester PALS tel: 0116 258 3100.**  
**email: [pals@uhl-tr.nhs.uk](mailto:pals@uhl-tr.nhs.uk)**

**Leicestershire Partnership NHS Trust PALS tel: 0116 225 6647.**  
**email: [pals@leicspart.nhs.uk](mailto:pals@leicspart.nhs.uk)**

Other organisations that could help:

**LEEAP** (Leicestershire Ethnic Elderly Advocacy Project) 30 Chandos Street, Leicester **tel: 0116 275 5515**

**For city services and support groups:** visit [www.leicester.gov.uk/socialcare](http://www.leicester.gov.uk/socialcare) or [www.leicester.gov.uk/health](http://www.leicester.gov.uk/health)

## Benefits and financial help

Many people find that facing a long-term illness affects their finances and can cause money problems. Several local organisations offer information and advice about benefits, grants and loans you may be able to obtain.

Another useful source of information is the Government citizens' information website, **[www.direct.gov.uk](http://www.direct.gov.uk)**

**Benefit Enquiry Line:** Confidential advice and information for people with disabilities, their carers and families about social security benefits, **tel: 0800 882200**

**Leicester Money Advice:** Free debt service which provides money advice and counselling for people who live in the city, **tel: 0116 242 1120**

**Welfare Rights Advice Line.** Telephone advice about benefits to people with a mental health problem and their carers, **tel: 0116 225 62 22**

**Age Concern:** Offers practical help, advice and information about services for older people. Age Concern Leicester has its own Welfare Rights Officer on **tel: 0116 222 0555**. Other officers can be contacted at:

Leicester, Leicester-Shire and Rutland - **tel: 0116 299 2233**

Lutterworth - **tel: 01455 557116**

Oadby and Wigston - **tel: 0116 288 5203**

Hinckley and Bosworth - **tel: 01455 619519**

It's worth checking that you're claiming everything that you are entitled to: **[www.entitledto.co.uk](http://www.entitledto.co.uk)** or **[www.direct.gov.uk/en/MoneyTaxAndBenefits/ BenefitsTaxCreditsAndOtherSupport](http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/MoneyTaxAndBenefits/BenefitsTaxCreditsAndOtherSupport)**

## The right equipment and social care

You might need special equipment to help you live at home, for example stair rails, jar openers, stair lifts, bath rails or even tap turners. If you are experiencing some form of disability as a result of your condition or its treatment, you may be entitled to help. If you are a hospital inpatient you may be seen by occupational therapists (OT) before you are discharged. The OT will assess you to find out if you need any special equipment or living aids to help you maintain your independence or improve your quality of life. If you are not an inpatient, you can ask your local social care services department for a care assessment to assess your needs.

The social care services offices are:

Blaby, Oadby and Wigston - **tel: 0116 278 7111**

Market Harborough - **tel: 01858 465331**

Charnwood - **tel: 01509 266641**

Melton Mowbray - **tel: 01664 564698**

Hinckley and Bosworth - **tel: 01455 636964**

North West Leicestershire - **tel: 01530 275200**

Rutland County Council - **tel: 01572 722577**

Leicester - **tel: 0116 253 1191**

**British Red Cross Disabled Living Centre: The Disabled Living Centre** at Aquis House, 211 Belgrave Gate, Leicester, LE1 3HT has a permanent display of daily living aids and equipment to promote independence. They offer free, impartial advice, information and assessment to people with disabilities, the elderly, carers and health professionals.

A referral is not required. Assessment is by appointment only.  
Monday – Friday, 9.00 am – 4.15 pm on **0845 373 0217** or  
**dlcinfo@redcross.org.uk**

**British Red Cross Independent Living Products Shop** at 113 Clarendon Park Road, Leicester, LE2 3AH stocks extensive range of equipment to improve the quality of life for elderly and disabled people on **0116 244 9049**. Monday – Friday: 9.00am – 5.00pm, Saturday: 9.00am – 4.30pm.

**British Red Cross** also provides a dial-a-wheelchair service providing manual wheelchairs on short-term loan (up to two months). This service is available from 244 London Road, Leicester, LE2 1RN **tel: 0116 270 0210**. Monday: 10.00am – 4.00pm

**The Disabled Living Foundation** – **www.dlf.org.uk** is a national charity that provides free, impartial advice about all types of daily living equipment for disabled adults and children, older people, their carers and families on **0845 130 9177**.

## Carers

A carer is someone who, without payment, provides help and support to a relative, friend or neighbour who, because of frailty, illness or disability is unable to manage without help.

**CLASP**, the carers centre, provides a wide range of support services for carers in Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland. CLASP is located on the Fourth Floor, Matrix House, Unit 19, Constitution Hill, Leicester LE1 1PL, **[www.claspthecarerscentre.org.uk](http://www.claspthecarerscentre.org.uk)** or **tel: 0116 251 0999**.  
**email: [enquiries@claspthecarerscentre.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@claspthecarerscentre.org.uk)**

Leicestershire has its own **carers project** which aims to provide carers with a local contact who can supply information, advice and support. The project also runs quarterly forums every year bringing carers together to enjoy each other's company and meet organisations and individuals providing support.

Carers development workers are located around the county and each team offers a variety of practical help, support, information and advice. Contact your local office for further details of the services and help available.

Voluntary Action Blaby District: Sandra Stocks **tel: 0116 272 7669**  
**email: [carers@vabd.org.uk](mailto:carers@vabd.org.uk)**

Voluntary Action Charnwood: Nita Patel **tel: 01509 631783**  
**email: [nita.patel@voluntaryactioncharnwood.org.uk](mailto:nita.patel@voluntaryactioncharnwood.org.uk)**

Voluntary Action Melton: Helen Brocklehurst **tel: 01664 485304**  
**email: [Helenb@voluntaryactionmelton.org.uk](mailto:Helenb@voluntaryactionmelton.org.uk)**

Voluntary Action Rutland: Gill Huddleston **tel: 01572 720052**  
**email: [gill@claspthecarerscentre.org.uk](mailto:gill@claspthecarerscentre.org.uk)**

North West Leicestershire CVS: Sarah Houlton-Ellingworth  
**tel: 01530 510515 email: [sarahhe@nwlcvs.org.uk](mailto:sarahhe@nwlcvs.org.uk)**

Oadby and Wigston Community Action: Sarah Lambrianou  
**tel: 0116 281 0026 ext.28 email: ksmith@vaow.org.uk**

**Voluntary Action South Leicestershire** runs a carers telephone befriending Service, where carers enjoy a weekly call from a volunteer befriender giving them time to talk to someone confidentially outside the family. If you care for someone and would like more information to help you in your caring role, contact either Jacqui Mowson on **01858 439263** or Diane Claridge on 01858 439262. The carers project is based at Voluntary Action South Leicestershire, The Settling Rooms, St, Mary' Place, Market Harborough, Leicestershire LE16 7DR. **email:jmowson@vasl.org.uk**

## Advice

**Citizens Advice Bureau: [www.citizensadvice.org.uk](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk)** gives advice on debt, benefits, housing, employment and other legal rights

Leicester - **tel: 0116 285 2801**

North West Leicestershire - **tel: 01530 454751**

South Leicestershire (Blaby, Lutterworth, Market Harborough) and outreach venues - **0844 848 9009** Debtline - **tel: 0844 248 0040**

Melton - **tel: 01664 484050**

Charnwood (Loughborough) - **tel: 01509 267376**

Hinckley - **tel: 0844 826 9710**

Shepshed - **tel: 01509 506663**

Rutland - **tel: 0845 120 3705**

**Mosaic, Shaping Disability Service (Leicester) - tel: 0116 251 5565. Helpline: 0116 262 6900. Textdirect: 18001 0116 251 5565.**

**Voluntary Action Leicester Shire** provides information and support for voluntary and community groups and volunteers in Leicester city and various venues across Leicestershire. See their website, **[www.valonline.org.uk](http://www.valonline.org.uk)** for more information or email **[helpline@valonline.org.uk](mailto:helpline@valonline.org.uk)** or telephone the helpline on **0116 257 5050**.

Voluntary Action Blaby District - **tel: 0116 272 7669**

Voluntary Action Oadby and Wigston - **tel: 0116 281 0026**

Voluntary Action South Leicestershire - **tel: 01858 432014**

NW Leicestershire CVS - **tel: 01530 510515**

Voluntary Action Charnwood - **tel: 01509 631750**

Voluntary Action Melton - **tel: 01664 483043**

Voluntary Action Hinckley and Bosworth - **tel: 01455 633002**

## Shopping

Shopping can be difficult if you find it hard to get around because of your condition. But there are local shopmobility schemes that provide or loan disability equipment to help, such as mobility scooters.

**Leicester Shopmobility** operates from two locations in the heart of the city:

Highcross Shopping Centre - **tel: 0116 253 2596**;

Haymarket Shopping Centre - **tel: 0116 253 7125**

Further information can be found at

**[www.leicester.gov.uk/shopmobility](http://www.leicester.gov.uk/shopmobility)** or for details and contacts of other Shopmobility schemes, visit **[www.shopmobility.org](http://www.shopmobility.org)**

Melton Mowbray - **tel: 01664 480677**

Market Harborough - **tel: 01858 410864**

Hinckley - **tel: 07982 302 780**

Fosse Park - **tel: 0116 263 0600**

Coalville - **tel: 07982 706 285**

Loughborough - **tel: 01536 412 886**

## Your choice...

You have the right to be treated where and when you choose.

For instance, if you needed hospital treatment, in the majority of cases, you can pick the hospital of your choice for your treatment, which is right for you and your and your family.

Your doctor or health team will discuss the choice with you, so that you have the right informed information to make the decision that is right for you.

You might want to choose a hospital closer to your families or friends, or a big teaching hospital. If you needed treatment, such as an operation, you may want to delay it to avoid a special occasion. But the choice is yours!

You can find out more at:

- Your GP practice
- Libraries
- **[www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk](http://www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk)**
- **NHS Direct Interactive** on digital satellite TV
- **NHS Direct** on **0845 4647**
- **[www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)**
- **[www.healthspace.nhs.uk](http://www.healthspace.nhs.uk)**
- **[www.chooseandbook.nhs.uk](http://www.chooseandbook.nhs.uk)**
- **[www.healthcarecommission.org.uk](http://www.healthcarecommission.org.uk)**
- **[www.patientopinion.org.uk](http://www.patientopinion.org.uk)**

## NHS Choices

A wide range of information and advice about your condition and choices about your care and treatment is available on the NHS website, '**NHS Choices**', or from the NHS telephone helpline, '**NHS Direct**'.

'**NHS Choices**' on **www.nhs.uk** is a wide ranging comprehensive guide and directory that gives:

- Medical advice about most conditions
- Services from GPs to gyms, doctors to dentists, midwives to memory problems
- 'All you need to know' guides covering 750 conditions and treatments
- Carers help and advice
- Blogs to talk to the experts and other patients
- Feedback from other patients
- Up to date medical news and views on treatment and research
- Tips and help on keeping you healthy
- Benefits advice
- Links to other medical, charity and support websites
- Comparisons between hospitals to help YOU chose where YOU want to be treated

For those without internet facilities, the same information and more is available from 'NHS Direct' – the 24 hours a day every day of the year helpline.

Trained staff are available round the clock to give advice and information on all aspects of health - from instant help with immediate symptoms or problems and where to get treatment; to details of walk in centres, clinics, local organisations, support and help on **0845 46 47**.



This publication has been jointly produced by the four NHS organisations in Leicester, Leicestershire County and Rutland. Printed copies are available by contacting any of the organisations:

- **NHS Leicestershire County and Rutland**

Lakeside House, 4 Smith Way, Grove Park, Enderby,  
Leicestershire, LE19 1SS

**tel: 0116 295 7689**

or **email: [communications@lcr.nhs.uk](mailto:communications@lcr.nhs.uk)**

- **NHS Leicester City**

St John's House, 30 East Street, Leicester, LE1 6NB

**tel: 0116 295 1100/1400**

or **email: [enquiries@leicestercity.nhs.uk](mailto:enquiries@leicestercity.nhs.uk)**

- **Leicestershire Partnership NHS Trust**

George Hine House, Gipsy Lane, Leicester, LE5 0TD

**tel: 0116 225 6485**

or **email: [feedback@leicspt.nhs.uk](mailto:feedback@leicspt.nhs.uk)**

- **University Hospitals of Leicester NHS Trust**

University Hospitals of Leicester NHS Trust Headquarters,  
Gwendolen House, Gwendolen Road, Leicester LE5 4QF

**tel: 0116 258 8963**

or **email: [communications@uhl-tr.nhs.uk](mailto:communications@uhl-tr.nhs.uk)**

For further information or comments, or if you would like to contribute to the production of this document or further publications, please contact any of the above trusts.

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The NHS trusts listed above cannot be held responsible for any information provided by non-NHS organisations detailed in this document