

What can I expect from the San Heart Failure Service?

The cardiac support nurse will continue to educate and support patients and their families whilst they remain in hospital. The nurse will refer the patient to allied health services and we strongly advise participation in the Cardiac Rehab program.

Following discharge, a schedule of teleconference calls will take place commencing 3 days after discharge and continuing indefinitely. In addition, the cardiac support nurse will be available on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays from 8am to 2pm only (not Public Holidays) for advice or reassurance. She will also be in regular contact with the patients Specialist and GP.

Participants in the home-based heart failure program will be required to monitor their weight, blood pressure (BP), and general condition daily and report these reading to the nurse during regular teleconference calls or contact the nurse if any discrepancies in weight or blood pressure occur or if symptoms worsen. The cardiac support nurse will provide advice and reassurance, may adjust medication if required, may activate a review at the San or an urgent review with the specialist.

If the cardiac support nurse is concerned at any time a face-to-face consultation will be conducted at the San with the nurse. The nurse will be in contact with the specialist and in most cases the patient will be discharged home and back into the care of the home-based heart failure service. If the specialist feels that admission is required, admission to one of the cardiac wards will be organised for closer monitoring and treatment.

Cost

The cost for this service may be covered by your health fund. The cardiac support nurse will initiate a check with your fund and advise you of this. If you wish to self-fund this program, please discuss this with the nurse.

Please note: face-to-face consultations that require more than the basic investigations, or admissions to hospital that incur additional costs, will be subject to your usual level of health fund cover.

Contacts

Contact with the Heart Failure service can be made through your Specialist

This service only takes referrals from San Specialist and not GPs at this time.



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Heart Failure Service



HEART FAILURE SERVICE

SYDNEY ADVENTIST HOSPITAL, (FONDLY KNOWN AS THE SAN) HAS BEEN A LEADING PROVIDER OF PRIVATE CARE SINCE 1903. IT WAS THE FIRST PRIVATE HOSPITAL IN AUSTRALIA TO OFFER EXTENSIVE CARDIAC SERVICES (INCLUDING OPEN HEART SURGERY) OVER 40 YEARS AGO. IT WAS A PIONEER THEN AND STILL REMAINS FOCUSED ON LEADING THE WAY NOW.

What is heart failure

Heart failure is a condition where the heart isn't pumping as well as it should and fails to pump adequate amounts of blood to the organs of the body. If the heart is damaged and not pumping properly, the heart muscle can become enlarged, weak or stiff. Because the body organs receive less blood and oxygen than they need, this results in a person feeling unwell, dizzy and tired. Extra fluid can also build up in the body as the heart is unable to pump the fluid and blood to where it is meant to go, and fluid can accumulate or 'pool' in lungs, abdomen and lower limbs. This results in feeling short of breath and causes swelling in the legs and/or abdomen. Heart failure can occur in the left, right or both sides of the heart.

What are the causes of heart failure?

There are many causes of heart failure but most commonly it is caused by a heart attack and coronary heart disease. Heart failure can occur quickly or build up over time as the heart is put under increasing stress or injury. Some other conditions which cause heart failure are, the ageing process, chronic conditions such as diabetes, damage to the heart muscle (caused by infection, alcohol abuse and certain medications) heart valve disease, heart rhythm problems, high blood pressure, and viruses

Prevalence of heart failure.

Heart failure is the leading cause of hospitalization for people >65 years of age in many industrialized countries. The 6-month readmission rate for exacerbation (worsening) of heart failure is close to 50%. Many of these admissions are preventable with education, early treatment and modification of risk factors via a home-based management program involving specialist cardiac personnel. Heart failure patients cared for in home-based management programs experience fewer hospital readmissions, demonstrate improved overall function and symptom relief, and enjoy a better quality of life compared to patients not treated in a home-based program. 'Improving outcomes in heart failure.'

Debra K. Moser, DNSc RN and Douglas L. Mann, MD.
Circulation. 2002; 105:28 10-2812



What is the San's home-based Heart Failure Service?

Heart failure is a long-term condition that usually needs lifelong management. The San's home-based heart failure service works collaboratively with groups of professionals to ensure patients with a diagnosis of heart failure are monitored and supported at home with the aim of assisting them to manage their condition effectively, preventing complications and hospital admissions. The home-based heart failure service supports people with heart failure live a longer, happier and healthier life.

The heart failure service team consists of specialist nurses, doctors, pharmacists, exercise physiologists, dietitians, physiotherapists and social workers.

The heart failure service will provide support with:

- Education and the encouragement of self-care
- Managing heart failure medicines
- Knowing what to do and when to act if symptoms get worse
- Assisting with monitoring the heart failure, general health, blood pressure and fluid levels
- Physical activity and exercise

The heart failure service is run as a home-based telehealth service, but face to face clinical consultations are conducted at the San when clinically required.

How do I enrol in the Heart Failure Service program?

After admission to hospital with a diagnosis of heart failure, if suitable, the Specialist will activate a referral to the home-based heart failure service. Once clinically stable, the cardiac support nurse will visit the patient on the ward and provide information about the service for discussion and consideration. If the required criteria is met the cardiac support nurse will enrol the patient in the service and begin some inpatient education sessions for the patient and family.