



## Cardiovascular (CVD) Risk Score

### Patient Information Leaflet

#### Why have I been sent this leaflet?

You are receiving this leaflet because you recently had a blood test to measure your cholesterol. As you may know, the amount of cholesterol in your blood can increase your risk of developing cardiovascular disease (CVD) which includes heart attack, stroke and peripheral vascular disease.

However, cholesterol is only one risk factor for CVD and using information from your medical record we can use estimate the likelihood of you having a stroke or heart attack in the next 10 years. The more risk factors you have, the greater your risk.

Risk factors for CVD include:

- Age, gender, ethnicity
- High blood pressure, cholesterol level, body mass index (height and weight),
- Smoking, alcohol intake
- Medical conditions such as diabetes, rheumatoid arthritis, chronic kidney disease
- Strong family history of heart disease (in relatives under 60 years)

#### What does 'risk' mean?

Risk is the chance of something happening. It is important to note that your risk of developing CVD is never zero and regardless of other risk factors, your risk naturally increases the older you get.

Your CVD Risk Score will tell you whether you are at low, moderate, or high risk of developing CVD in the next 10 years.

#### Low risk – CVD Risk Score of less than 10%

This means that you have less than a one in ten chance of having a stroke or heart attack in the next 10 years.

#### Moderate risk – CVD Risk Score of 10-20%

This means that you have between a one to two in ten chance of having a stroke or heart attack in the next 10 years.

#### High risk – CVD Risk Score of more than 20%

This means that you have at least a two in ten chance of having a stroke or heart attack in the next 10 years

### **What can I do to lower my risk?**

New guidance suggests that anyone with a score of more than 10% (moderate risk) should be offered help to reduce their risk (including making lifestyle changes) and a consideration of starting medication. Above 20% we recommend starting medication to lower cholesterol (statins) and making lifestyle changes.

### **What lifestyle changes can I make?**

You may have noticed that the list of risk factors includes things we can change (such as smoking status, weight and blood pressure) and things we cannot change (such as age and gender). We can therefore try to reduce our risk by taking a few simple steps including:

- Stop smoking – Karlene, our smoking cessation Nurse can assist you with this.
- Eat a healthy balanced diet - low in fat, sugar and salt. Eat 5 fruit or vege a day.
- Reduce alcohol intake – aim for less than 14 units a week for men and women.
- Keep an eye on your weight and take steps to lose weight if needed. Aim for BMI 20-25. Our weight loss Nurse, Anna can help you with this.
- Exercise regularly (walking is a great start).
- Taking medication to reduce blood pressure if needed.

### **What are statins?**

Statins are a group of medications that help to reduce cholesterol which in some cases can lower your risk of heart attack and stroke by up to 25%. Statins are designed to be taken every night and are generally considered to be safe. However as with any medication, unwanted side effects can occur.

If you then wish to discuss the option of taking a statin then please make an appointment to speak to your nurse or GP.