

# Information for patients 3-6 months after a heart attack

**Why risk another heart attack,  
or a stroke?**



**Keep  
taking your  
medicine.**

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# What is the risk of future heart problems?

**It's been several months since your heart attack, and life has hopefully calmed down a bit.**

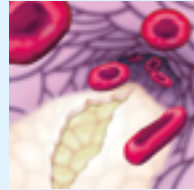
You've done a great job of making the lifestyle changes recommended by your doctor. You may even have settled into what some people call a 'new normal', taking good care of yourself and your heart.

It's important to remember that, even though your heart attack happened a while ago, the risk of cardiovascular problems remains for a long time. Having one heart attack makes you more likely to have another one. You are also more likely to have a stroke, or even die from heart-related problems.

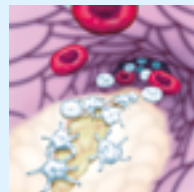


## Remember how a heart attack or stroke happens?

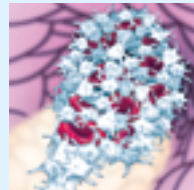
Throughout life, fatty material can build up in the lining of arteries forming small deposits that can burst open, damaging the artery.



The body tries to repair the damage using sticky blood cells called platelets, which join together triggering the formation of a clot that acts like a sticking plaster.



The clot gets in the way of the blood and reduces or stops blood flow to the heart (heart attack) or brain (stroke).



**After a heart attack, daily medicine and lifestyle changes can help to protect you from another heart attack or a stroke.**

# Keep taking your medicine

## Daily medicine should now be a part of your 'new normal' life.

Your doctor has probably prescribed you two antiplatelet medicines. These medicines help prevent the formation of new and dangerous clots that could cause another heart attack or a stroke.

That's why it's important to keep taking your medicine as instructed by your doctor.

The duration of treatment with antiplatelet medicines will be determined by your doctor depending on your individual risk factors such as being 65 years or older, having diabetes, kidney disease or multi-vessel disease, or having had more than one heart attack.

Continuing to take your antiplatelet medicine will help protect your heart. It's a positive step forward for taking care of your health.

### Remember how antiplatelet medicines work?

Antiplatelet medicines stop platelets sticking together and causing clots to form. This helps to keep the blood vessels open.



**If you're having trouble keeping to your medicine routine, ask your doctor for advice.**

# Healthy lifestyle changes can help

Don't forget that some healthy lifestyle changes can also help protect you from future heart-related problems, including:



A healthy, balanced diet can help you lose weight, reduce your blood pressure, and reduce bad cholesterol levels

Quitting smoking is one of the best things you can do for your heart and your overall health



Physical activity can help to control your weight, reduce your blood pressure, reduce bad cholesterol and raise good cholesterol levels

Take your medicine as instructed by your doctor to help reduce your risk of another stroke or heart attack



# Important safety information

## What should I do if I have more questions about my antiplatelet medication?

If you are unsure about anything, it's a good idea to look in the patient information leaflet that came with your medicine.

If you still have questions or concerns, talk to your doctor, nurse or pharmacist. It can often be helpful to write a list of questions down to help organise your thoughts and bring this to your next appointment so that you don't forget to ask these questions at your next appointment. All of your healthcare practitioners will be happy to explain more and can answer any queries you have, whether this is about lifestyle changes, treatment options or to explain medical terminology.

## Where can I find out more?

The patient information leaflet that came inside your medicine pack/box should answer any additional questions you may have.

## Reporting of side effects

If you get any side effects, talk to your doctor, pharmacist or nurse. This includes any possible side effects not listed in the package leaflet. You can also report side effects directly via the Yellow Card Scheme at [www.mhra.gov.uk/yellowcard](http://www.mhra.gov.uk/yellowcard) or search for MHRA Yellow Card in the Google Play or Apple App Store. By reporting side effects you can help provide more information on the safety of this medicine.

## Continue taking your antiplatelet therapy

Do not stop taking your medicine without talking to the doctor who prescribed it for you.

# Helping to protect your heart every day

Make sure you understand everything you need to know about your continued risk of heart-related problems. Use the checklist below to help you. Share any information with family and friends, who can support you in taking care of your heart.

I understand why I am still at risk of having another heart attack or a stroke

I understand that it is important to keep taking my medicine as instructed by my doctor

**Name of doctor:**

**My next appointment is with:**

**Date of next appointment:**

**This is the second in a series of three booklets:**

1. Information for patients in the early days after a heart attack
2. Information for patients 3-6 months after a heart attack
3. Information for patients 1 year after a heart attack

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