

Lifestyle modifications

If you have been diagnosed with an inherited heart disease your doctor will most likely recommend some lifestyle modifications to try to reduce your risk of sudden cardiac death.

The most common recommendation is a reduction in participation in high-level sport and competitive sport. Competitive sports include those that require significant exertion, for example touch football, basketball, netball, squash and sprinting and competitive cycling. These recommendations are in place as it has been observed that blackouts and cardiac arrest often occur in people with these conditions during or just after exercise. These restrictions particularly important with hypertrophic cardiomyopathy (HCM) and arrhythmogenic right ventricular cardiomyopathy (ARVC). Swimming restrictions may also be advised, particularly if you have been diagnosed with long QT syndrome or CPVT.

Although you may be advised to avoid competitive sport, it is still important to maintain a healthy lifestyle. Regular light exercise such as walking is not only good for your heart but also good for your general health.

Recreational drugs and energy drinks must not be used by patients with an inherited heart disease.

Consult with your GP or Cardiologist before taking any new medications, this includes "herbal remedies", many of which contain substances highly dangerous to those vulnerable to heart rhythm problems.

You should inform the attending doctor of your condition before any surgical/ dental procedure.

Your cardiologist should discuss the particular lifestyle changes you should make with you.

If you have long QT syndrome a long list of medications should be avoided. These are found at www.qtdrugs.org. If you have Brugada syndrome, a smaller list of medications to avoid is found at www.Brugadadrugs.org.