



World Heart Day – Raising Awareness of Cardiovascular Disease

Today is World Heart Day.

World Heart Day is celebrated every year on 29 September. The aim of this day is to raise awareness of cardiovascular disease and educate people so that they can reduce their risk of cardiovascular disease.

What is Cardiovascular Disease?

Cardiovascular disease is a general term used for medical conditions which affect the heart or blood vessels (arteries and veins).

Cardiovascular disease is the world's leading cause of death. According to the World Heart Federation, it claims 17.9 million lives each year. The majority of these deaths are a result of heart attacks or strokes.

In addition, people with cardiovascular disease are more vulnerable to Covid-19 (Coronavirus).

Types of Cardiovascular Disease

There are four main types of cardiovascular disease:

1. **Coronary Heart Disease** – this occurs when the flow of blood to the heart is blocked or reduced and can result in chest pain, heart attacks or heart failure.
2. **Strokes and TIAs** – this occurs when the flow of the blood to the brain is cut off. If the blood flow is only stopped temporarily then this can result in a “transient ischaemic attack” (TIA) or “mini-stroke”. If the flow of blood is cut off for longer, this can result in a stroke which can cause significant brain damage or death.
3. **Peripheral Arterial Disease** – this occurs when there is a blockage in an artery in one of your limbs, usually the legs. It can cause cramping, pain, numbness or weakness. If this is not identified and managed appropriately, it may get worse to the point where the limb cannot be salvaged and needs to be amputated.

4. **Aortic Disease** – this occurs when your largest artery (the aorta) becomes weakened and there is a chance it can bulge outwards causing an aortic aneurysm or could burst and cause life-threatening bleeding.

Causes of Cardiovascular Disease

There are a number of factors which can increase your risk of developing cardiovascular disease. The more risk factors you have, the more likely you are to develop cardiovascular disease.

Risk factors include:

- Family history of cardiovascular disease
- Diabetes
- Physical inactivity
- Being overweight or obesity
- High cholesterol
- High blood pressure
- Smoking

In addition, men are more likely to develop cardiovascular disease than women, and as you get older your risk of cardiovascular disease increases. Your ethnicity can also play a role.

How to reduce your risk of developing Cardiovascular Disease

NHS Guidance suggests that the following steps will help reduce your risk of cardiovascular disease:

- Having a balanced diet
- Exercising regularly

- Maintaining a healthy weight
- Cutting down on alcohol
- Stop smoking

Negligent treatment of Cardiovascular Disease

Misdiagnosis, delayed diagnosis, mismanagement and inappropriate treatment can have a significant impact on someone with cardiovascular disease and can potentially result in avoidable harm or a failure to prevent a deterioration of their condition.

Some examples of potentially negligent treatment include:

- Misdiagnosing the severity of a TIA or stroke
- Delay in diagnosis of Peripheral Arterial Disease
- Failure to refer to a cardiac specialist in a timely manner
- Inadequate cardiac monitoring of a patient in hospital
- Misinterpretation of cardiac investigations such as ECGs or echocardiograms
- Negligent heart surgery

How can we help?

Our specialist [Medical Negligence](#) team at Lester Aldridge have experience in dealing with claims relating to injuries suffered due to poor management of cardiovascular disease.

If you or anyone in your family has been affected by cardiovascular disease and you are concerned about the treatment you received, our [Personal Injury team](#) can assist on 0344 967 0793 or online.enquiries@la-law.com.