

Structural Heart Valve Disease

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Dear Patient,

Your doctor believes your aortic valve, which lets blood out of the heart to flow around the body, has become too narrow. They have therefore sent a letter referring you to the Bristol Heart Institute for consideration of a procedure known as a TAVI, which stands for transcatheter aortic valve implantation, to correct this.

There are a series of investigations which are required to determine if TAVI is appropriate for you, some of which you may have had already, some of which you may be on a waiting list for. These investigations are:

- Echocardiogram – an ultrasound scan of the heart
- Computerised tomography (CT) scan – a scan in which you lie on a table and move through a donut-shaped scanner to take pictures of your vessels to get information to plan if a TAVI can be performed
- Coronary angiogram – a procedure in which contrast dye is injected into the arteries around the heart to see if they are narrowed

Once the Bristol Heart Institute has the information from these investigations the TAVI team will work out if a TAVI is technically possible and if it is the best option for you. This will be done at an MDT (multidisciplinary team meeting). Afterwards you will receive a letter notifying you of the outcome of this meeting. If the outcome is that you have been listed for TAVI, you will then also receive an outpatient appointment letter for pre-operative assessment where there will be the opportunity to discuss any concerns you may have.

Whilst all of this is being undertaken you should be aware of “red flag” symptoms which may suggest you need treatment sooner. These include:

- New (or worsening of current) shortness of breath
- Chest pain
- Blacking out or feeling close to blacking out
- New, or worsening of existing, leg swelling

Should any of these occur you should either alert your GP or attend ED, depending on the seriousness of the symptom. You could also update our structural heart valve nurses so we are aware that things have changed – this can be done either by email – TAVI@UHBW.nhs.uk or by phone – 0117 3426595.

We understand that this can be an anxious time for you. We have put together lots of helpful information and links to videos and sources of further support on our website – www.uhbristol.nhs.uk/TAVI. If you do not have internet access and would like further information, call the team and we can post an information leaflet to you.

We hope the information provided is helpful, and we will be in touch after your case has been discussed at our MDT.

Kind regards

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Lead Structural Heart Valve Nurse

On behalf of the Structural Heart Valve Team