

# THE HEART SUPPORT NEWSLETTER



Irish Heart  
Foundation

from the Irish Heart Foundation and it's members

April 2021

## Welcome to our April issue!

**Covid 19** and the **Covid 19 vaccination process** remain the prominent news story for heart patients at this time, but with an increasing number being vaccinated, we know that the risks of contracting Covid are finally beginning to reduce for our heart patient community.

However, challenges still remain for those under 70's with heart conditions. April has seen further lobbying from the Heart Failure Patient panel members, for heart failure and surgical patients under 70 to be prioritised for vaccination. Many of the 7,000 people in this bracket, also live in multi-generational households, meaning limitations to their ability to shield themselves from the virus. The panel have lobbied Government, NIAC, Cardiologists and GPs, with a press and radio campaign, submissions and letters, and finally, there has been some movement, where the clinical judgement of these patients' medical practitioners, as opposed to strict cohort classifications only, is being permitted as a deciding factor in these patients getting vaccinated sooner. Thus, an increasing number of Cardiologists and GPs are now putting their names forward for prioritisation. We are hoping the remainder will urgently follow suit.



It has been a tough time for parents with heart conditions trying to shield from Covid

## Patient Supports for you...

The Irish Heart Foundation is now making tablet devices available to those who would like to avail of our online supports. If you would like to avail of this offer, please phone 087 3790798



## Supports available

Website: [www.irishheart.ie](http://www.irishheart.ie)

On Facebook:  
Heart Support Network

On Zoom: email  
[heartfailure@irishheart.ie](mailto:heartfailure@irishheart.ie)

By email:  
[support@irishheart.ie](mailto:support@irishheart.ie)

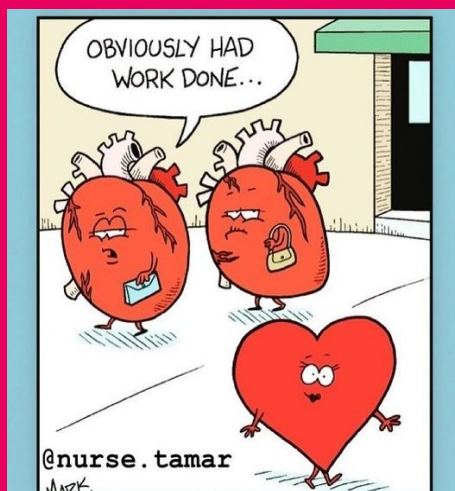
In print: The Heart Support  
Newsletter

On the phone: For advice  
and support call our Nurse  
line on 01 6685001

Or to speak to another  
heart patient call  
087 7781561

## THE HAPPY HEART SPACE...

because smiling is good for the heart!



The Irish Heart Foundation is continuing to offer a range of patient supports online and by phone (see opp). May 13th will see our **next zoom gathering**, and anyone wishing to attend can do so by emailing [heartfailure@irishheart.ie](mailto:heartfailure@irishheart.ie) for a link. If you are unsure how to use zoom we are happy to run through the process over the phone, if you call 087 3790798.

Finally, don't forget that a **free counselling service** exists for those who feel the need to talk through the challenges of this time. To avail of this service, please call 087 7781561.

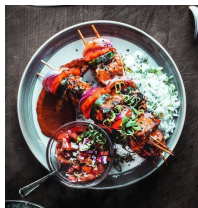
from Lucinda and Katie, Patient Support services, Irish Heart Foundation & Pauline, Martin, Tom, Esther, Dan, MJ, Annette and Sheilagh, the Heart Failure Patient panel

Working together for you!

## Martin's Tricolour of Rosemary Skewers

### Ingredients:

10 Rosemary twigs · 400g chunks of shoulder of lamb · 400g chunks of beef · 400g chunks of shoulder of pork · 150g diced smoked bacon · 1 red pepper · 1 Green pepper · 1 diced onion · Crushed garlic · Olive oil · Chopped mint · Chopped sage · Bay leaves



**Method:** Strip Rosemary of leaves · Marinade meat in oil, mint, garlic, sage (leave covered in fridge approx. 4 hours) · Dice peppers · Thread alternate meats on rosemary twigs with peppers, bay leaves and onion in between · Grill, pan-fry or barbeque, turning regularly until golden brown · Serve with baby potatoes, rice or salad.

## Tips for those taking medication

**Know the names** - Each medicine has two names. The name the pharmaceutical company gives it and the generic name (the name of the drug itself). Both these names are usually on the packet and are good to know.



**Record** - Keep a list of all the medicines you take. Remember to keep the list up to date. If you have any allergies, keep a list of these too. If you need to go into hospital, bring your list and all of your tablets with you.

**Other treatments** - Before buying any medicines from your pharmacy (cough medicine, supplements, or herbal or complementary medicines), check that they are suitable for you, and that they do not interfere with the prescription medicines you are taking. Your pharmacist will be able to tell you this.

**Side effects** — Medicines may cause side effects. These usually only affect a small number of people. Some may be more serious than others. If you feel you have a side effect, it is very important not to stop taking the medicine before talking to your doctor or pharmacist. Do not change or stop your medicines without talking to your doctor.

## A LITTLE BIT OF WISDOM...



*"Our greatest glory is not in never falling, but in rising every time we fall" ~ Confucius, Chinese philosopher, 551-479 BC*

## THE PATIENT EXPERIENCE - MJ's Story

I was preparing to go to the burial of a friend and former work colleague at the end of April 2012 when I suddenly got an uneasy feeling in my chest. Within a few minutes the pain had increased in intensity. I knew immediately that I was in trouble. I recognised that I was having a cardiac event.

I was very familiar with these events as I had dealt with them over several decades as an emergency medical technician (EMT) with the Civil Defence. Except this time was different - I was the patient. I was alone at home – my wife Sheyla was in Dublin. I did not panic and carefully thought out a plan. I phoned my neighbour (now referred to as Nurse Ratched) and explained to her what was happening, asked her to get me some Aspirin and to phone for an ambulance.

While waiting for the ambulance to arrive I documented a full set of observations. The paramedic was very thankful for these observations but enquired "but where is the patient"? Imagine his surprise when he realised that I was the patient! A cardiac monitor confirmed what I already knew and a very fast "blues & twos" journey through a very busy Limerick city centre on a Saturday morning ensued. The A & E consultant in University Hospital Limerick (UHL) diagnosed that I had a very significant heart attack and that I would have to be transferred to Cork University Hospital (CUH). At that stage my wife phoned me from Dublin and during that very brief call I suffered a cardiac arrest. I was successfully resuscitated and regained consciousness immediately. The consultant then informed me that the transfer to CUH was immediate. There, I had four stents inserted.

Looking back I did not have any symptoms before the event or indeed afterwards. I was back doing the things I like to do within two months such as gardening and travelling. It really has not changed my lifestyle in any way. Life is great and age is just a number!

