

Acute Myocardial Infarction (Heart attack) AMI or MI

What is an MI ?

- This is when one of your blood vessels that cover your heart or sit on your heart like a crown (hence the name-Coronary arteries) becomes blocked and the blood cannot supply the heart muscle (Myocardial) and that muscle dies (Infarction).

How long before the Heart Muscle will die ?

- On average six hours. Therefore, you need to be rushed to hospital within the time of the chest pain (this is normally the time that the blockage started) to have the blockage removed. Sometimes a tube is put in the damaged coronary artery to stop it collapsing. This is known as a stent.

What are the Signs & Symptoms of a M.I ?

- The signs (something you can feel, see, smell or touch, eg colour of the patient, the breathing of the patient etc.) are pale, sweaty skin, fast pulse, rapid breathing, the patient having a “fear of impending doom”. The symptoms (something that the patient tells you, eg “I have a headache”) Chest pain like a vice around the chest, continuous chest pain.

What can we do ?

- Immediately call an ambulance or if very close to a suitable hospital, take them by your own transport. If they are not allergic to Aspirin, give them 300 mg of Aspirin (each Aspirin is normally 75mg tablet so give 4 x tablets).
- Constant reassurance and try and remove any stress from the patient, eg who’s going to look after my fencing gear, who’s going to drive my children home, etc. If they have their own GTN medication (medication that is a spray under the tongue for Angina sufferers) advise them take it, provided they are sat down.

Remember

- Stay calm, reassure the patient. Find out if there is a public access Defibrillator, AED (AED- Automatic External Defibrillator) in the vicinity. Every fencing competition that I attend, I always ask the organisers ‘Where is your AED please?’ Pre-warned is pre-armed.
- Thank you and stay healthy. Please visit my webpage as I provide the necessary, one day emergency First Aid at Work courses, needed for the qualification of Fencing Coaches.

www.evexiatraining.co.uk

Who Is Bill Berkley?

I was born in Exmouth in February 1960 but moved to Plymouth when I was just three months old and have remained there all my life, so I can call myself a 'Janner.' I married, Debbie in 1984 and have a son, Daniel (who followed my career in the NHS and became a mental health nurse but now works as a guard on GWR) and a daughter, Sophie (who is getting married in September this year at Bickleigh Barracks in Plymouth which means more overtime for me to work to pay for the big event.



I have been employed by the NHS for the last 41 years and have been with the Southwest Ambulance Service NHS foundation Trust (SWAST) as a Specialist Paramedic, since 1987. Previously I worked in the Operating Theatres as an Operating Department Practitioner. In this time, I have dealt with over 300 cardiac arrests in adults and six in children and dealt with everything from minor trauma to life-threatening emergencies. I usually mentor a 3-year BSc student paramedic, who I try coach, educate, and point in the right direction.

I currently work part time – 19 hrs per week for SWAST – but I also teach GP practices in Immediate Life Support (ILS) courses, as well as firefighters in casualty care in Devon and Somerset region. I have my own medical teaching company www.evexiatraining.co.uk and deliver lectures at Plymouth University.

My wife is a qualified nurse and I had an agreement that when the children were born one of us would work seven days a week and the other would deal with the family and house. As I can't cook and can't stand DIY I worked 7 days a week which suited us both.

When I went part-time in 2017, it caused a few arguments to put it mildly and my wife said, "you



need to get a hobby". I've always wanted to do fencing but never had the time, so I started fencing in 2017: time occupied, arguments stopped.

I'm still relatively new at fencing and still haven't decided what weapon suits me and what handle to use. I am not a natural at fencing and would love to be able to dance up and down the piste with ease but this, unfortunately, is not me. I have tenacity, perseverance and I enjoy the competitions. I am now Chair of

www.Newtonabbotfencing.co.uk club in South Devon and enjoy meeting up weekly with fellow fencers. If you see me at any of the competitions, please come up and say, Hi.

I am very pleased to be a member of BVF and honoured that I have been invited to give monthly blogs on medical emergencies.