

HEART IMPLANT SAVES LIFE THREE TIMES

THE LIFE of an 85 year-old Dorset patient has been saved three times by the latest cardiac device implanted at Dorset County Hospital NHS Foundation Trust in Dorchester. Lionel Jones from Weymouth received the heart failure defibrillator to improve heart function and protect against cardiac arrest.

The device Mr Jones has been fitted with can shock the heart within seconds if cardiac arrest is imminent and is implanted in patients at most risk. Mr Jones was the first patient at Dorset County Hospital to receive the heart failure device, successfully implanted by Consultant Cardiologist Dr Tim Edwards.

The implant is produced by Medtronic, the cardiac implant specialist who provide a range of pacemaker devices now available at Dorset County Hospital for West Dorset patients. The latest more complex devices improve heart function, regulate dangerous rhythm disturbances and allow remote monitoring and technical tests to be conducted direct from the patient's home.

Dr Edwards has achieved another first in the Cardiology Unit at Dorset County Hospital, as he was the first UK Consultant to implant one of the newer generation pacemaker defibrillators in a West Dorset cardiac patient. Recently he said: 'Providing a "best practice" service means using the latest technology. These devices allow us to treat breathlessness and fatigue in our heart failure patients as well as preventing cardiac arrest in high-risk patients. Remote monitoring is a major advance, patients benefit greatly and the unit's resources are used to maximum efficiency.'

Mr Jones understands how important the procedure has been. 'Thanks to this astonishing device fitted by the highly skilled cardiology team at Dorset County

Hospital I'm here to tell the tale. My overall quality of life has improved, my condition is regularly monitored and if problems occur the device takes over, allowing me to look forward to another birthday.'

Since April 2007, Dorset County Hospital's cardiac services have been dramatically transformed. Before this the Cardiology Unit assessed and treated 2,500 patients per annum and the only invasive procedures offered were diagnostic angiography and permanent pacemakers. Responding to the needs of the local population the team now provides: a comprehensive percutaneous coronary intervention service and an implantable cardioverter defibrillator implant and follow-up service. Current ICD implant rates are among the best in the UK.

Capacity is greatly increased nowadays. 2008 patient numbers for assessment, treatment and post-operative care have risen to over 4,000, due to investment from Dorset County Hospital NHS Foundation Trust and the dedicated approach of the skilled cardiology team. The unit offers the latest facilities and has recently put forward for a NHS best practice award.

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