

SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- **LVAD**
- **Tips**
- **Sweet BBQ**
- **Atenolol**

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What is an LVAD?

What is an LVAD? An LVAD, also known as a left ventricular assist device, is a pump that is placed on the heart to help pump blood flow to the rest of the body. While an LVAD is the most common type of pump, there are VADs that can be placed on the right side of the heart or on both sides of the heart. With an LVAD, there is an insertion point at the bottom of the left ventricle, the blood then goes thru the pump, then goes thru another tube that is connected to the aorta.



Who needs an LVAD? Individuals with very weak hearts (aka advanced heart failure) that do not respond to traditional medications or other therapies like biventricular pacing. Let's

break down these individuals into three groups. The first group is the bridge to recovery group. This group of people usually has an event that weakens the heart very rapidly and the heart needs some help getting over that event. This event may be a heart attack or a virus. The LVAD is placed to help that person recover over the course of days to weeks then it is usually removed.

The second group is called the bridge to transplant group. This is the most common reason people undergo an LVAD implantation. They need a heart transplant but they are too sick and will not make it to wait on the list for a donor heart to become available. The LVAD provides them that valuable waiting time until they can receive a heart transplant. The last group is called destination therapy. This group of individuals have an LVAD placed to provide them a longer and more active life because they are not candidates for a heart transplant. Reasons for not being a transplant candidate are many but may include advanced age and having multiple other medical conditions.

Who puts an LVAD in? An LVAD is usually placed by a specially trained cardiac surgeon who works at a heart transplant center. While the surgeon places the device, there is an entire team that helps with the process before and after the surgery.

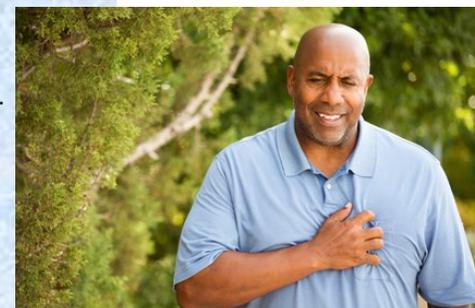
(1,4).

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Tip of the Month

Tips to prevent Heart Failure:

1. Make sure your blood pressure is controlled.
2. Make sure your blood sugar if you have diabetes is under good control.
3. Quit smoking and limit or avoid alcohol intake.
4. Do not use illegal drugs. Cocaine and methamphetamines are a few examples known to cause heart failure.
5. Keep your weight down. A normal weight for your height would mean you have a BMI (body mass index) under 25.
6. Take your medications as prescribed.
7. Seek medical treatment right away when you develop symptoms that could be a heart attack such as chest pressure, arm pain, shortness of breath, or jaw pain. (3)



Sweet BBQ Sauce



Recipe from the book
Breaking the Salt Habit by
Erik Williams. (2).

Ingredients:

1 1/2 cups NSA Ketchup
1 cup Brown Sugar, packed
6 oz. can Pineapple Juice
1/2 cup Red Wine Vinegar
1 Tbsp. Mustard Powder
1 1/2 Tbsp. Worcestershire
Sauce
2 tsp. Paprika
2 tsp. Liquid Smoke
1 tsp. Garlic Powder
1 tsp Black Pepper
1/2 tsp. Onion Powder

1/8 tsp. Cayenne Pepper, (optional)

Directions:

1. Combine all ingredients in a small saucepan and simmer for 20-25 minutes.
2. Enjoy!

Health Information

Serving size 1 Tbsp.
Servings 48
Calories 31
Total fat 0g
Saturated fat 0g
Cholesterol 0mg
Sodium 7 mg
Total fiber <1 g
Protein 0g
Carbohydrates 10 g
Potassium 27 mg
Sugar 9 g

Quote of the Month: “You may have to fight a battle more than once to win it.” Margaret Thatcher

Did you Know?



Did you know that there is a shortage of generic Atenolol? Atenolol is a medication generally used for high blood pressure. It is in the class of drug called beta blockers. This class of drug can lower the heart rate and the blood pressure. While many people take Atenolol for high blood pressure, it has also been used for migraines. According to the FDA, Atenolol was declared a shortage July 26, 2017. The reason listed is a shortage in an active ingredient need to make the drug. As of today, it is still listed as an unknown as to when the shortage will be over. Brand name Atenolol may be used (Tenormin) however, expect to pay more for it. If the dollars are not worth it, there are many other beta blockers that can take Atenolol's place, all of which are generic except one.

Two of the more commonly used generic beta blockers include Metoprolol (Lopressor, Toprol) and Carvedilol (Coreg). Usually these can easily be switched out. Whatever you do, do not abruptly stop or run out of Atenolol. Your heart and your blood pressure will likely not like it. It could even cause a heart attack or abnormal heart rhythm problem. So check with pharmacy and stay updated. Sometimes one pharmacy will have a supply over another. In the end, if it is unavailable, do not go without. Contact your healthcare to discuss starting a different beta blocker. Overall, cost should be about the same. (5).

What happens after LVAD surgery? After surgery most people are monitored in the ICU for several days. During this time the pump is monitored closely as is the function of the other organs such as the kidneys, liver, and lungs. The blood has to be thinned so the pump does not develop clots. With the blood thinning process also comes a risk of bleeding so this also requires close monitoring. In many cases, extra fluid that the body has accumulated also has to be removed. Once that individual has become stable, many of the lines, tubes, including the breathing tube, can be removed and the patient can be transferred out of the ICU onto the floor. With this move also comes more mobility and working with physical therapy. Nutrition and wound care are constantly being evaluated and monitored as well. Once everything has been shown to be working well and the patient is tolerating food and walking, then the discharge process begins. In order to have a successful transition to home, an extensive amount of education has to be done for the patient, family, and caregivers. A VAD coordinator generally is in charge of making sure everything runs smoothly.



Are there restrictions with an LVAD? It is important prevent infections. So avoiding being around someone that has a contagious illness is important. Avoiding places like daycare centers or nursing homes where there are a lot of illnesses and germs is recommended. Contact sports are also not recommended as the device may become damaged or dislodged. Regular exercise is recommended once the body is healed from surgery. Avoiding extreme heat or cold is important. Driving may also be restricted. A constant power source has to be available for battery charging so traveling to remote areas where this is not available is likely not an option. (1,4).

To sum up, there are many therapies for heart failure and an LVAD is one of those options when the normal therapies fail or cannot be given. Everyone with heart failure is not a candidate for an LVAD. But for some, it is an option that can give a new lease on life. It is a big surgery and a big life change, but for some people, it can save there life.