

## Patients Attending the ED with LVADs

If the patient is having a medical emergency please contact the implant centre emergency contact (provided on the patient's trak alert).

**Note :** The LVAD assists the heart by pumping blood continuously therefore, the patient may not have palpable peripheral pulses!

Don't assume the patient has arrested if you are not feeling a pulse. You will need to:

- Feel the skin to see if its warm and dry.
- Auscultate over the pump to verify whether it is running (makes a continuous whirring sound if operating).
- Examine nail beds and lips to confirm they are pink.

**Do NOT administer external chest compressions.**

### **Common complications/presentations in LVAD patients:**

- Infection (drive line, pocket, systemic)
- thromboembolism
- haemorrhage
- RV failure

### Pitfalls in assessment:

- No pulse, BP often unrecordable
- Ensure anticoagulated
- High suspicion for sepsis (driveline)
- Echo early
- Don't forget ECG (arrhythmia)
- No CPR
- High threshold for blood products if transplant candidate

**SEEK HELP FROM THE PATIENT'S VAD CENTRE VERY EARLY**