

Irish Heart Foundation and Michael Lyster Team Up to Draw Attention to the Warning Signs of Heart Failure

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The Irish Heart Foundation has launched a new campaign, *Pay Attention to the Signs*, to raise awareness of heart failure symptoms. The campaign, supported by Novartis, aims to encourage those aged 50 and over to be aware of the signs of heart failure, as early detection of the symptoms can significantly improve a patient's prognosis. **Swollen ankles, fatigue, and shortness of breath are warning signs that should never be ignored.**

Speaking at the launch about his own experience of living with heart failure was Sunday Game presenter **Michael Lyster**; *"Looking back now, the warning signs of heart failure were clearly there, but I didn't realise what was coming down the road. I was ignoring a lot of things that were happening to me, and that was a mistake. I was constantly tired, my ankles were swollen, and I would wake up at night panting for breath. Eventually, it got to a stage where I couldn't ignore it any longer."*

Heart failure is a life-threatening condition in which the heart cannot pump enough blood around the body, as the walls of the heart become too weak or too stiff to work properly¹. However, with access to timely diagnosis, appropriate medical management and follow-up services, a patient's prognosis can be significantly improved. It is estimated that 90,000 people live with the condition in Ireland². Due to Ireland's ageing population, heart failure is set to increase dramatically, leading to an increase in hospitalisations from heart failure of more than 50% over the next 25 years³.

Dr Angie Brown, Medical Director, Irish Heart Foundation, said; *'When we see warning signs on the road we pay attention. But, when it's our own body, sometimes we can ignore the signs. Heart failure can often go unnoticed because its symptoms come on gradually. It's easy to attribute tiredness to a busy lifestyle, and breathlessness to being out of shape. These are signs we need to watch out for. If you are concerned about heart failure, please contact the Irish Heart Foundation's nurse line on 1800 25 25 50 or visit Knowyourheart.ie.'*

Loretto Callaghan, Managing Director, Novartis said; *"If you or a loved one is diagnosed with a chronic condition like heart failure, it's normal to have a lot of questions. Novartis is proud to support the Irish Heart Foundation's campaign and public information evenings, to ensure those who have concerns get the support they need."*

For more information about *Pay Attention to the Signs* please visit Knowyourheart.ie, or to speak to healthcare professional about heart failure or call the Irish Heart Foundation's dedicated nurse helpline on 1800 25 25 50.

¹Mosterd A, Hoes, A, Clinical epidemiology of heart failure, Heart 2007;93:1137-1146

²Health Service Executive, Changing Cardiovascular Health. National Cardiovascular Health Policy 2010-2019

³The Cost of Heart Failure in Ireland, Social, Economic and Health Implications. <https://www.heartbeattrust.ie>

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