

HEART FAILURE

The most commonly prescribed treatments are:

DIURETICS - Also known as water pills, rid the body of extra fluid and prevent swelling. Diuretics increase the rate of urine formation.

ACE INHIBITORS - Help prevent blood vessels from constricting.

BETA-BLOCKERS - Slow the heart rate and reduce blood pressure by blocking factors that cause blood vessels to constrict.

NITRATES - Dilate the body's blood vessels allowing for improved blood flow.

POTASSIUM - Helps control your heart rhythm and helps your muscles function normally. Potassium is especially important if you are taking diuretics, which can cause your body to lose too much potassium.



Talk to Your Doctor if you Have Any of the Following...

- Shortness of breath that gets worse
- A gain of 2-3 pounds in 1 day or 5 pounds in 1 week
- New swelling in your feet, ankles or legs
- Coughing or wheezing at night, or needing to sleep propped or sitting up using two or more pillows
- Chest pain or a heavy feeling in your chest
- Side effects from your medicine
- Failure to lose weight

And most importantly...

Self-Management!

You can improve your own quality of life tremendously with a few lifestyle changes:

WEIGH YOURSELF DAILY- Get a scale! Weighing yourself daily is a good way to see if your body is retaining extra fluid. Keep a weight diary.

GET A GOOD NIGHT SLEEP- Lack of sleep will make you feel worse.

QUIT SMOKING OR CHEWING TOBACCO- Chemicals in tobacco inhibit your heart's ability to work well. There are many resources available to help you quit smoking, here are a few:

- www.anti-smoking.org
- www.quitsmoking.com
- www.whyquit.com
- www.lungusa.org

LOSE WEIGHT- Your heart has to work harder if you're overweight.

GET MORE EXERCISE- Certain exercises can strengthen your heart and improve your mood. Work with your doctor to develop a home activity program that will work best for you.

LIMIT ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES- Alcohol can interfere with medications.

KEEP BLOOD PRESSURE CONTROLLED- High blood pressure strains your heart which will weaken it further. High blood pressure causes the heart to work harder than it should to pump blood to all parts of the body.

EAT A HEALTHY DIET- Limit salt intake to 2 grams per day and water intake to 1.5-2 liters per day. Eat heart healthy!

Know when and with whom to make your follow-up appointments.

Visit our heart healthy Web site at

www.njha.com/heartfailure/

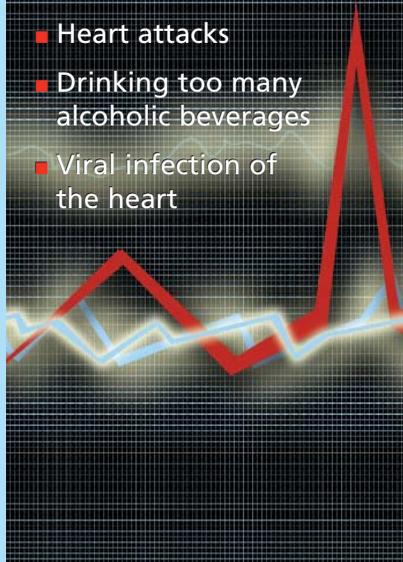
for the nutritional information and other tools and resources.



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THE MOST COMMON CAUSES OF HF ARE

- Uncontrolled high blood pressure
- Heart attacks
- Drinking too many alcoholic beverages
- Viral infection of the heart



- Heart failure is a chronic condition. This means it cannot be cured, but with the correct care it can be treated and managed.
- Heart failure affects nearly 5 million Americans, and approximately 400,000 new cases are diagnosed each year. It is the leading cause of hospitalization among people over the age of 65.
- Heart Failure is the most frequent admission diagnosis in the Medicare population.
- Heart failure happens over time. The heart muscle is weakened and your heart is less able to pump blood throughout your body.

What Causes Heart Failure?



Anything that can weaken your heart and make it less able to pump blood normally can cause heart failure. Most patients with heart failure have underlying forms of heart disease, especially Coronary Artery Disease

(CAD). This complicates both the treatment and diagnosis of HF. Heart failure is usually underdiagnosed in the early stages, however, early diagnosis and treatment can prevent complications.

Know the symptoms! Usually misdiagnosis occurs because the symptoms of heart failure can be mistaken for normal signs of getting older.

- Fatigue
- Shortness of breath or coughing
- Feeling tired, weak or dizzy
- Fluid retention
- Swelling of hands and lower legs or gaining weight
- The sensation of being bloated

- Losing your appetite
- An irregular heartbeat
- Fluid can also buildup in your lungs. This is what is referred to as "congestion".

It is important to notify your doctor as soon as your symptoms begin. You will be less likely to end up in the hospital and will be able to keep your heart healthy and strong!

You may hear the term "**Cardiac Remodeling**" in your experience with HF. This is when your heart gradually changes shape becoming larger, thinner, and therefore, weaker. This is the reason people experience these symptoms.

Heart Failure Classification System

From the New York Heart Association (NYHA)

- CLASS I** - No limitation and no symptoms with ordinary physical activity.
- CLASS II** - Slight limitation and symptoms with ordinary physical activity.
- CLASS III** - More pronounced limitation because of symptoms, even with less than ordinary physical activity. Comfortable only at rest.
- CLASS IV** - Severe to complete limitation of physical activity. Symptoms are present with any degree of physical activity and also at rest.

What about the different types?

- Systolic Heart Failure is the most common type. This is when your heart can't contract its ventricles forcefully enough to expel the majority of the blood, and is measured by the ejection fraction. This measures the amount of blood expelled from the left ventricle. Your primary care provider may start to show concern if your ejection fraction reads less than 40 percent.
- Diastolic Heart Failure is when your heart's lower ventricles cannot fill properly.

Diagnosis

Two tests are mainly used to diagnose HF:

- The Echocardiogram uses sound waves to visualize the heart chambers and measure cardiac function. This measures the ejection fraction and how far the disease has progressed.
- The Electrocardiogram (ECG) monitors electrical signals in the heart and determines whether medications to control the heart rate are necessary.



Medications

Depending on your type and severity of heart failure, your doctor will prescribe the medications most appropriate for you.