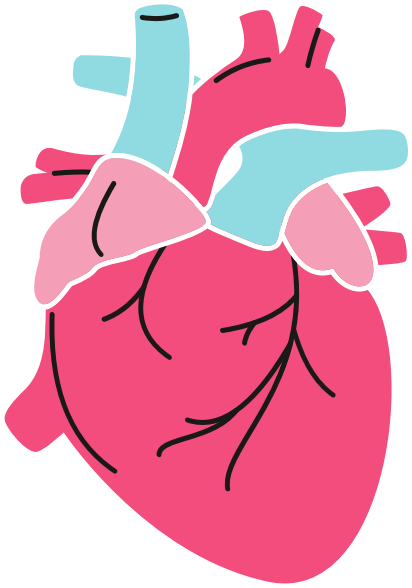
Congestive Heart Failure

What is Congestive Heart Failure?

Congestive Heart Failure, commonly called “CHF” or simply “heart failure, is a condition where the body isn’t able to efficiently pump enough blood and oxygen throughout the body. The heart is forced to work harder to pump blood and gradually weakens. Although this sounds like a life-threatening disease, there are medications your doctor can prescribe to manage the condition and lessen symptoms.

How is heart failure diagnosed?

There is no single test that can diagnose CHF. Your doctor will ask you about your symptoms and medical history, and so a physical exam. They can also use various tests, such as a chest X-ray, electrocardiogram (EKG), or echocardiogram to see if there is damage to your heart.



In the United States, nearly 6.7 million adults 20 years old or older have heart failure

Symptoms of heart failure

You may see symptoms such as:

- Shortness of breath (especially during activity or while lying down)
- Fatigue and weakness
- Swelling (edema) in your legs, ankles, feet, or abdomen
- a persistent cough or wheezing
- Sudden weight gain from fluid buildup

How is heart failure treated?

The treatment your doctor prescirbes will depend on your symptoms and the cause of heart failure, but may include:

- **ACE Inhibitors**, such as lisinopril or enalapril, widen the blood vessels and improve blood flow. They may also help heart failure from getting worse.
- **Diuretics** (water pill), such as furosemide, help the body get rid of extra fluid and reduce swelling.
- **Beta blockers,** such as metoprolol or captopril, are sometimes used to help lessen the stress on the heart by slowing the heart rate, lowering blood pressure, and relaxing heart muscles.
- **Digoxin** is used in some people to strengthens the heart's contractions.
- **Eplerenone** is a drug used to treat high blood pressure and heart failure. It is typically used after a heart attack.

There are other medications that your doctor may prescribe. They can determine what the best treatments are for you.



Congestive Heart Failure (CHF) is one of the most common reasons for hospital admissions in people aged 65 years and older.

Lifestyle changes

There are also steps you can take at home to help treat your heart failure. Talk with your doctor about what you can do at home, which may include:

- Quitting smoking
- Stay physically active
- Following a low-sodium diet
- Limit how much alcohol you drink

Make sure to take your medications every day as prescribed.

You can find additional information by visiting the American Heart Association