

Chronic Heart Failure

Heart failure happens when the heart cannot pump enough blood and oxygen to support other organs in your body. Heart failure is a serious condition, but it does not mean that the heart has stopped beating.

Risk Factors for Heart Failure

Diseases that damage your heart also increase your risk for heart failure. Some of these diseases include:

- Coronary heart disease (the most common type of heart disease) and heart attacks.
- High blood pressure.
- Diabetes.

Unhealthy behaviors can also increase your risk for heart failure, especially for people who have one of the diseases listed above. Unhealthy behaviors include:

- Smoking tobacco.
- Eating foods high in fat, cholesterol, and sodium.
- Not getting enough physical activity.
- Being obese.



Signs and Symptoms of Heart Failure

Common symptoms of heart failure include:

- Shortness of breath during daily activities.
- Having trouble breathing when lying down.
- Weight gain with swelling in the feet, legs, ankles, or stomach.
- Generally feeling tired or weak.

Treating Heart Failure

Early diagnosis and treatment can improve quality and length of life for people who have heart failure. Treatment usually involves taking medications, reducing sodium in the diet, and getting daily physical activity. People with heart failure also track their symptoms each day so that they can discuss these symptoms with their health care team.