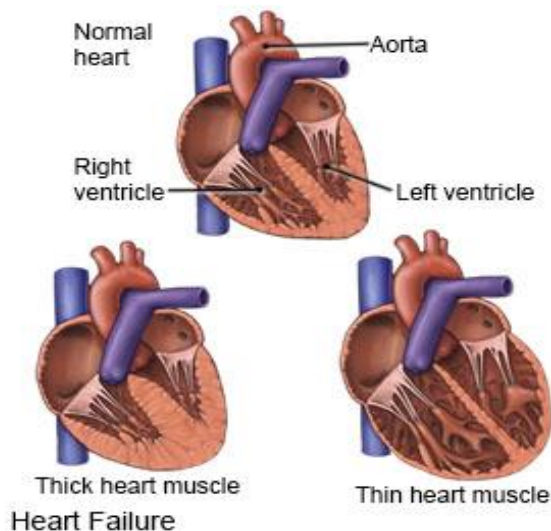


Heart Failure

Severe Heart failure, also known as Heart Failure, means that your heart has become too weak or stiff to fill and pump blood effectively. It is a long-term condition that tends to get worse over time. Heart failure can be made worse by excessive alcohol consumption, smoking, high sodium (salt) intake, diabetes, and obesity.

What are the signs and symptoms of Heart Failure?

- Shortness of breath with activity that worsens to shortness of breath at rest
- Shortness of breath while lying down
- Severe shortness of breath and cough at night that usually wakes you up
- Feeling of lightheadedness when standing up
- Purple color around the mouth and fingernails
- Confusion or anxiety
- Chest pain at night
- Periods of not breathing, then rapid breathing
- Lack of energy (often worsened by physical activity) or trouble sleeping
- Swelling in your ankles, legs, or abdomen
- Fast or irregular heartbeat
- Fingers and toes cold to the touch



How is Heart Failure diagnosed?

Your doctor will ask about your symptoms. Blood tests will help detect heart problems in the coronary arteries or decreased blood flow. An electrocardiogram records your heart rhythm and how fast your heart beats. It allows doctors to see if you have heart block or have had a heart attack. The echocardiogram uses sound waves to show the structure, if there are problems with the heart valves, and if the heart chambers are working properly. X-rays, computed tomography (CT) scans, or magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) may show the cause of Heart Failure, or blood or fluid clots in the lungs.

What is the treatment for Heart Failure?

- **Medication** to regulate your heart rhythm and lower your blood pressure. You may need medicine to decrease excess fluids. Do not stop taking it on your own.
- **Cardiac rehab** will help you strengthen your heart through exercise, relaxation, stress management, and nutrition.
- **Oxygen** will help you breathe easier if your level is lower than normal. A CPAP machine may be used to keep your airway open while you sleep.
- **Surgery** to implant a pacemaker or other device in your chest that regulates your heart rhythm. Other types of surgery can open blocked heart vessels, replace a damaged heart valve, or remove scar tissue.

What can I do to control the swelling caused by the accumulated fluid?

- **Raise your legs above the level of your heart.** This helps with fluid that collects in the legs or ankles. Prop your legs up on pillows or blankets to keep them elevated comfortably. Try not to stand for long periods of time during the day. Move around to keep your blood circulating.
- **Limit sodium (salt) intake.** Your doctor might give you a limit, such as 2,300 milligrams (mg) a day, and a nutritionist can show you how to read food labels to determine the number of mg in a food.
- **Drink fluids as directed.** You may need to limit the amount of fluids you drink in 24 hours. He may tell you to limit fluids to 1.5 to 2 liters a day. It will tell you how often to drink fluids during the day.
- **Weigh yourself every morning.** Use the same scale in the same place. Do this after going to the bathroom but before consuming any food or drink. Wear the same type of clothing each time. Write down your weight and call your doctor if you have a sudden weight gain. Swelling and weight gain are signs of fluid buildup.



What can I do to manage Heart Failure?

- **Do not smoke.** Nicotine and other chemicals in cigarettes and cigars can harm your lungs and heart.

- **Don't use alcohol or illegal drugs.** Alcohol and drugs can increase your risk of high blood pressure, diabetes, and coronary artery disease.
- **Eat heart-healthy foods.** Heart-healthy foods include fruits, vegetables, lean meat (such as beef, chicken, or pork, fish, such as salmon and tuna), and low-fat dairy products. Include nuts, whole grain breads, beans, and baked beans. Replace butter and margarine with olive or canola oils.
- **Get any medical conditions you have under control.** These include high blood pressure, diabetes, obesity, high cholesterol, metabolic syndrome, and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease COPD. You will have fewer symptoms if you control these health conditions.
- **Maintain a healthy weight and stay active.** Being overweight puts you at higher risk for high blood pressure, diabetes, and coronary artery disease. Walking is a type of physical activity that helps maintain your strength and improve your mood. Physical activity also helps control your body weight.
- **Get vaccinated.** Influenza, Pneumonia and Coronavirus can pose a danger to a person with Heart Failure.

Social and Emotional Aspect

For tips, tools, and resources on how you and your family can cope with the emotional and physical concerns that arise during and after your medical treatment, please visit your primary care physician or contact the following phone lines:

Medical Advice Line

1-844-347-7801

TTY-1-844-347-7804

Referencias:

CareNotes Micromedex. Retrieved from © Copyright IBM Corporation 2022

Prepared by licensed Health Educators. Revised by January 2022. ©First Medical Health Plan, Inc.