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Managing
HEART FAILURE

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What is **HEART FAILURE?**

The heart is a muscle that pumps blood through the body by relaxing and squeezing. In a person with heart failure, also called congestive heart failure (CHF), the heart may not pump enough blood to meet the body's needs. Fluid may also build up in the body.

Doctors measure the heart's pumping function by testing what percentage of blood is emptied from the heart. This is called an **ejection fraction** or EF. There are two main types of heart failure:

- **HFrEF:** Heart failure with a **reduced** EF (systolic heart failure)
- **HFpEF:** Heart failure with a **preserved** EF (diastolic heart failure)

What **CAUSES** heart failure?

Heart failure has many causes, such as:

- Blocked arteries, which happen during a heart attack
- Heart valve problems
- High blood pressure
- Some medications
- Infections
- Being very overweight
- Diabetes
- Genetic causes
- Toxins such as alcohol

What are the **SYMPTOMS** of heart failure?

Feeling unusually tired

Chest pain, which may be worse when lying down or exercising

Swelling of the legs or abdomen

Fast or unsteady heartbeats while resting

Shortness of breath, which may be worse at night, when lying down, or when exercising or even walking

What **TESTS** are used to diagnose heart failure?

- An **echocardiogram** is an ultrasound imaging test that uses sound waves to see how well the heart is working.
- A **chest X-ray** shows if fluid is backing up into the lungs.
- During an **electrocardiogram (ECG),** stickers are placed on the chest to evaluate the heart's electrical activity.
- During **cardiac catheterization,** a small tube is placed into the heart through an artery in the thigh or wrist. This tube helps measure heart pressure and pumping function. It may also be used to inject dye into the heart and arteries to take pictures.
- During **magnetic resonance imaging (MRI),** a machine creates pictures that show the heart tissue and heart valves.
- **Blood testing** can show signs of heart failure.

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How is heart failure **TREATED?**

Common Medications for Heart Failure

Most people with heart failure will need to take medications to stay healthy. These include:

ACE Inhibitors, ARBs, and ARNIs

Angiotensin-converting enzyme (ACE) inhibitors, angiotensin II receptor blockers (ARBs), and angiotensin receptor-neprilysin inhibitors (ARNIs) relax blood vessels and lower blood pressure. This improves blood flow and makes it easier for the heart to pump. These medications also protect the kidneys.

Examples: lisinopril, quinapril, losartan, valsartan, Entresto®

Beta Blockers

Beta blockers slow heart rate and lower blood pressure. This makes it easier for the heart to pump blood.

Examples: bisoprolol, carvedilol, metoprolol succinate

MRAs

Mineralocorticoid receptor antagonists (MRAs) prevent stress hormones from making heart failure worse. They also help remove fluid and salt from the body. This reduces the amount of blood the heart must pump.

Examples: spironolactone, eplerenone

SGLTi

Sodium-glucose cotransporter inhibitors (SGLTi) prevent heart failure from getting worse. They are often prescribed for people with diabetes but also work for people who do not have diabetes. They also protect the kidneys.

Examples: Farxiga®, Invokana®, Jardiance®

People with HFrEF may need all four types of medications above. People with HFpEF may need an SGLTi, an MRA, and an ARNi or ARB. Talk to your doctor to learn what medications are best for you.

Other Types of Medications

Diuretics (also called “water pills”) may be prescribed for people with heart failure. These help remove extra salt and water from the body. If you are working on losing weight, your doctor may prescribe a **glucagon-like peptide-1 (GLP-1).**

Devices

People with heart failure, especially those who have HFrEF, may be at risk for developing arrythmias. These are abnormal heart rhythms and can be life-threatening. In some cases, a device may be implanted into the body to stop these rhythms.

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Lifestyle Changes

Healthy habits can make a big difference in your health if you have heart failure. Ask your doctor if any of these changes would be right for you:

- **Eat a low-sodium (salt) diet and limit processed foods.** Choose healthy foods such as fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and lean protein (chicken or fish).
- **Exercise regularly.** This can decrease your symptoms.
  - » **Tip:** Visit **www.healthmapsolutions.com/patient-resources** to download a guide to Exercising for Health.
- **Avoid tobacco products.** If you smoke, work on a plan to quit.
- **Limit alcohol use.**
- **If you are overweight, work on losing weight.** This will make it easier for your heart to do its job.

WHAT CAN I DO if I have heart failure?

In addition to making the lifestyle changes above, there are other ways you can stay healthy:

- **Take your medications** as directed by your doctor, even if you feel well.
- **Talk to your doctor before taking new medications or supplements.** Some over-the-counter medications may not be safe to take. These include ibuprofen (Advil® or Motrin®) and naproxen (Aleve®).
- **See your doctor regularly.** If you have other conditions, you may need to see more than one doctor.
- **Weigh yourself each morning** after using the bathroom. Tell your doctor right away if your weight goes up quickly.
- **Watch for changes in your symptoms.** If you don't feel well, you may need to call your doctor.
  - » **Tip:** Visit **www.healthmapsolutions.com/patient-resources** to download a Heart Failure Action Plan. This will help you learn what steps to take when you don't feel well.

Remember: You can live well with heart failure if you take your medications, follow your doctor's advice, and make healthy choices. For help with your health goals, call the Healthmap Care Navigation team at **1-800-481-0474 (TTY: 711)**. Patients must meet program requirements to access Healthmap services.

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www.healthmapsolutions.com/patient-resources

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