

WHAT IS IT?

Congestive Heart Failure (CHF) is when the heart works less efficiently than normal and is unable to pump enough blood to meet the body's need for blood and oxygen. It is often progressive (gradually gets worse).

PREVENTION

Avoid smoking (secondhand smoke).

Can cause damage to your arteries that can result in heart failure.

Eat in heart-healthy ways.

Eat foods that contain little saturated fat, trans fat, sugar or salt. Think fruits and vegetables, low-fat dairy, lean protein such as chicken without the skin, and "good" fats like those found in olive oil, fish and avocados.

Lose pounds if you're overweight.

Along with diet, being physically active helps achieve this goal and is also great for your heart. Your Physical and Occupational Therapist can help!

Talk to your doctor and closely follow your treatment program.

Ongoing care and medication management can make a big difference.

SYMPTOMS OF CHF

- Shortness of breath
- Water retention, especially in the legs, ankles and feet
- Rapid or irregular heart rate
- Rapid weight gain: *A 3lb or greater weight gain overnight is a good indication you are retaining fluid*
- Persistent productive cough

Sleep Apnea:

A condition where the muscles that allow air into the lungs briefly collapse, is linked to heart failure, you may be evaluated and treated for it.

TREATMENT

CHF is a chronic condition that can be managed to prevent further damage and control current symptoms.

✓ Monitor Your Symptoms

- Weigh yourself daily to track fluid retention indicated by sudden weight gain.
- Check for swelling in the legs and feet.

✓ Diet and Lifestyle

- Reduce salt and caffeine intake
- Increase activity
- Reduce stress
- Maintain a healthy weight

✓ See Your Doctor

- Maintain regular visits with your doctor.

✓ Exercise

- A licensed Physical or Occupational Therapist can help you to develop an individualized home exercise program. They can help you use breathing techniques and adaptive equipment to improve your independence and quality of life.

✓ Medication/Surgery

- Remember to take your medications as prescribed by your doctor.
- Surgery may be recommended to: repair/open blocked valves or arteries, insert a pacemaker or defibrillator, transplant a new heart.

EDUCATION & SUPPORT



AMERICAN HEART ASSOCIATION

1-800-242-8721
www.Heart.org

JOHNS HOPKINS MEDICINE

www.HopkinsMedicine.org/health/conditions-and-diseases/congestive-heart-failure-prevention-treatment-and-research