

How Can I Live With Heart Failure?



There are about 5 million Americans living with congestive heart failure today. In fact, it's one of the most common reasons people 65 or older go to the hospital. Fortunately, heart failure can be treated. Getting good medical care, following doctor's orders and learning about heart failure will help you lead a comfortable life.

Congestive heart failure (CHF), or heart failure, is a condition in which the heart can't pump enough blood into the body's other organs. The "failing" heart keeps working but not as efficiently as it should. People with heart failure can't exert themselves because they become short of breath and tired.

What medicine might I take?

Here are some examples:

1. **ACE Inhibitor** - lowers blood pressure and decreases the heart's workload. Examples: Lisinopril (Zestril), Enalapril (Vasotec), Ramipril (Altace), Benazepril (Lotensin)
2. **Diuretic** – helps your body get rid of extra water and sodium. Examples: Furosemide (Lasix), Bumetanide (Bumex), Torsemide (Demedex)
3. **Beta Blocker**- lowers blood pressure and slows heart rate. Examples: Atenolol (Tenormin), Metoprolol (Lopressor or Toprol-XL), Propranolol (Inderal)
4. **Digoxin** – helps your heart pump better. Examples: Lanoxin or Digitek
5. **Vasodilator** – lowers blood pressure and opens and relaxes blood vessels. Examples: Amlodipine (Norvasc), Felodipine (Plendil), Hydralazine

What will help me get better?

Visit the doctor and follow his or her advice.

Start an aerobic exercise plan as your doctor advises.

Read food labels and avoid foods high in salt or sodium.

Keep up your interests and be upbeat!

What should I watch out for?

Tell you doctor right away if...

1. You gain 3 or more pounds in a day or so.
 2. You see that your feet, ankles or other parts of your body are puffy.
 3. It's hard to breathe.
 4. You can't do what you could do the day before.
 5. You have "the flu."
 6. You get a fever.
 7. You have chest pain.
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How can I learn more?

1. Talk to your doctor (PCP) _____ (phone #) _____, nurse or other healthcare professionals.
 2. Call 1-800-242-8721, or visit www.americanheart.org to learn more about heart disease.
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What are the Warning Signs of Heart Attack and Stroke?

Warning Signs of Heart Attack:

Some heart attacks are sudden and intense, but most of them start slowly with mild pain or discomfort with one or more of these symptoms:

- **Chest discomfort**
- **Discomfort in other areas of the upper body**
- **Shortness of breath with or without chest discomfort**
- **Other signs including breaking out in a cold sweat, nausea or lightheadedness**

Warning Signs of a Stroke:

- **Sudden weakness or numbness of the face, arm or leg, especially on one side of the body**
 - **Sudden confusion, trouble speaking or understanding**
 - **Sudden trouble seeing in one or both eyes**
 - **Sudden trouble walking, dizziness, loss of balance or coordination**
- Sudden severe headache wit no known cause**

Knowledge is power so Learn and Live!

If you have any questions or concerns please call your Primary Care Physician at the above number.