

Information About Heart Failure

What Is Heart Failure?

Heart failure is not a “failure.” It is a weakness that makes the heart unable to pump enough blood throughout the body.

Heart failure can also occur when the heart becomes so thick or stiff that it cannot let enough blood go through to meet the body's needs.

The heart can be weakened by other diseases, such as high blood pressure, atherosclerosis (ath uh roh skluh ROH sis), or blockages in the arteries.

Can Heart Failure Be Treated?

Heart failure can shorten your life. However, new treatments, drugs, and exercise can give you the chance to live a longer and healthier life.

To treat your heart failure, your doctor will:

- Ask you about your symptoms, other diseases, and other medical tests that you have had.
- Look at the effect your heart failure is having on the rest of your body. You may need special tests, such as exercise testing and echocardiograms (ek o KAR de o grams).
- Decide the best treatment for you. This may include other medicines, exercise, and a change in your eating habits.

continued

What Can You Do?

Heart failure is not managed only by your doctor. **You** are the key to the success of managing your heart failure.

You will be asked to learn about the disease. You will also learn how to monitor your condition and adjust your medicines. Prepare yourself to work with your doctor and to be an important part of your own care.

Glossary

Term	Pronunciation	Definition
Atherosclerosis	ath uh roh skluh ROH sis	A common arterial disease in which fat builds up in the large- and medium-sized arteries, causing the arteries to become narrow or harden
Echocardiogram	ek o KAR de o gram	A test that shows the heart's shape and size and what happens when the heart beats