

CONGESTIVE HEART FAILURE

Definition:

Congestive Heart Failure (CHF) is a state in which the heart is weakened and is unable to pump blood efficiently, causing a backup of fluid into the lungs or the veins in the body. There are many different causes of CHF. The most common are coronary disease, viral infection of the heart muscle, disease of the heart Valves and high blood pressure.

What kinds of symptoms do people with CHF have?

- Shortness of breath
- Cough
- Leg swelling
- Fatigue
- Difficulty breathing when laying flat

How is CHF diagnosed?

Through a physical exam and chest x-ray by your health care provided. Other tests may include an echocardiogram (ultrasound of the heart) to find the cause of CHF.

How is CHF treated?

Medicines are given to:

- Help the kidneys to release extra water from the body in the form of Urine.
- Expand the blood vessels to reduce the work of the heart.
- Improve the pumping action of the heart.
- Lower blood pressure.

Other helpful steps include: following a low salt diet, following a prescribed level of activity, stopping smoking and keeping track of your weight.

What needs to be done at home after discharge?

Congestive Heart Failure can, in most cases, be controlled if YOU

- Take your medication as prescribed.
- Control your salt intake.
- Exercise as advised.
- Weigh yourself daily and report a sudden weight gain of 3-5 pounds in Two days to your doctor.
- Stop smoking.

AT HOME HEART FAILURE INSTRUCTIONS

Medications:

- Be aware of what your medications do, their side effects, your prescribed dosage
And the best schedule to take them.
- ALWAYS bring your medications bottles with you to your doctor visits.
Carry a current list of your medications in your billfold.

Daily Weight:

- Weigh yourself on the same scale each morning after using the bathroom and
Before you eat your breakfast.
- Keep a record of your weight daily.
- Bring the record of your daily weight to your doctor's visits.
- A gain of 2 pounds overnight or a gain of 5 pounds in one week should be
Reported to your doctor.

Diet:

- Limiting the amount of salt in your diet is extremely important.
- It may be easier to eat several small meals per day than three large meals.
- Avoid any alcoholic beverages.

Smoking:

- DON'T SMOKE

Exercise:

- Gradual increase in exercise to improve endurance is recommended.
- Avoid vigorous exercise that puts sudden demands on the heart.
- Plan for rest periods throughout the day.

CALL YOUR DOCTOR IF:

- You have a sudden weight gain of 2-3 pounds overnight, or your weight has
Increased 5 pounds in a week.
- You experience change or increase in any of the following:
 - Shortness of breath
 - Swelling
 - Trouble sleeping at night due to breathing
 - Fatigue
 - Frequent dry cough

Follow-up Doctor's Visits:

Take your "weight diary" and your medication bottles with you to your doctor visit.