

# Congestive Heart Failure

## Basic Information & Treatment

### Description

A condition in which the heart is not able to effectively pump blood.

### Medication

- There are multiple medications which can be prescribed by your health care provider such as: diuretics (water pills), digoxin, blood pressure medications. In special situations blood thinners, or other medications may be used

### Frequent signs and symptoms

- Shortness of breath either with exertion or when lying flat
  - Ankle or leg swelling
  - Fatigue
  - Increased urination at night
  - May awaken at night gasping for air
  - Cough
- It is important that you understand what medications you are on. Questions should be directed to your health care provider or pharmacist.

### Preventive Measures

- Avoid excessive use of salt. At first this may mean removing salt shaker from the table, but later a more severe salt restricted diet may be required
- Stop smoking
- Avoid Alcohol
- Reduce weight if overweight. Extra pounds put stress on your heart
- Sudden weight gain may indicate worsening of heart failure
- Rest periods may help during the day

### Return to ER if:

- You develop worsening shortness of breath or chest pain
- Rapid or irregular heartbeat
- You are not feeling better in 2-3 days.

### Expected Outcome

- With the proper precautions, dietary modifications, and medication, heart failure is often stabilized and you can return to your usual activity.
- However, if left untreated and not monitored, heart failure can easily develop into a life threatening medical condition

For Questions or Concerns call: Telephone  
Care Program 1-800-455-0057



Reviewed by the  
Patient Education Committee