

HEART FAILURE

Once we accept our limits, we go beyond them. – Albert Einstein

Heart Failure - Basics

- Inability of the heart to pump as well as it should, resulting in the body not getting the oxygen it needs
- Compensatory mechanism is stretching of the heart and contracting faster; however, despite these efforts there is usually chronic, progressive decline in the ability of the heart to contract and relax, resulting in enlarged heart and worsening heart failure.

Symptoms

- Difficulty breathing on exertion or at rest, or when lying flat
- Night time cough
- Chest pain/pressure and palpitations, rapid heart rate
- Frequent need to urinate at night
- Swelling of both ankles
- Fatigue, weakness



Strategies to improve heart failure

- Address risk factors, such as obesity, high blood pressure, coronary artery disease, diabetes, metabolic syndrome, hyperactive thyroid gland, alcohol or drug abuse.
- Exercise is safe. It improves breathing, work capacity and overall health, and decreases risk for cardiovascular death. Incorporate aerobic activities (walking, bike riding, including use of elliptical machine, swimming, gardening, bowling), endurance, resistance and/or respiratory training. Consult with healthcare provider regarding any exercise program.
- Get adequate, quality sleep - lack of quality sleep is associated with cardiac morbidity. Limit stress which contributes to heart disease.
- Eat a healthy diet. Limit sugars, avoid processed foods and trans fats. Correct micronutrient deficits: CoQ10, omega-3, magnesium, and vitamin K2, D, B9, B12.