

Condition:

Heart Failure

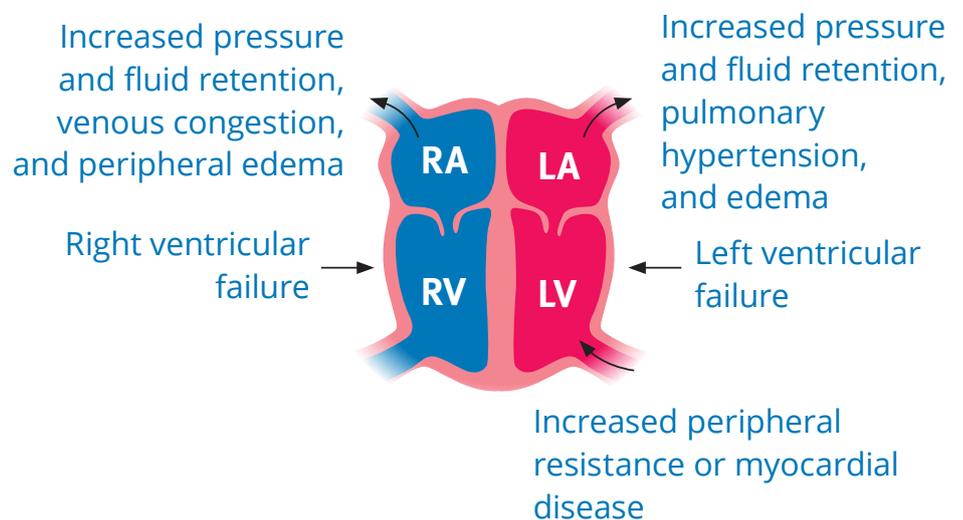
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What is Heart Failure?

Heart Failure is when your heart is failing to pump the blood efficiently around your body. There are 4 chambers to your heart. Each of the four chambers of the heart can fail individually or in combination. Heart Failure is normally progressive. It cannot be cured but it can be controlled to support you to live a full and active life including working.

A diagnosis of heart failure can be very difficult to cope with on a psychological level but there is support available via the GP or consultant cardiologist.



Reference



Click on the link to watch a video about Heart Failure
Video (link opens in new window)

Heart Failure and work

- **Manual work:** If you do manual work that involves lifting or moving heavy objects, or operating heavy equipment, you should talk to your GP or heart specialist about it. It may be necessary for you to talk to your employers about a different or sedentary role.
- **Low mood:** The trauma of having a diagnosis of heart failure can lead to depression. If this is the case, talking therapies or medication may help – this can be arranged by seeing your GP.
- **Travel:** Travelling long distances to and from work may be challenging depending on your general health and symptoms. If you have any concerns this can be discussed with your GP or you may be able to request reasonable adjustments such as home working on some days.
- **Parking:** If parking nearer to your workplace is not available, you can apply for a blue badge. This will enable you to park in a disabled parking area.

How do I know if I may have Heart Failure?

Various other conditions may have similar symptoms to heart failure. The main symptoms of heart failure are:

- Breathlessness
- Chesty cough that last a long time
- Feeling tired most of the time and finding exercise exhausting
- Swollen ankles and legs

What are the causes of a Heart Failure?

The causes listed below can contribute to heart failure singularly or in combination.

- **Coronary heart disease** – heart function is affected because the arteries supplying blood to the heart are blocked. This may be due to angina or heart attack.
- **High blood pressure** – when high blood pressure goes untreated for long periods of time.
- **Cardiomyopathy** – the heart muscles of the chambers of the heart could be deteriorating in function.
- **Heart rhythm problems** – such as atrial fibrillation
- **Damage** to or other problems with the heart valves including congenital

Congenital heart disease – you are born with a heart defect that affects the function of the heart.

Talking to your GP or other health care provider about your Heart Failure or concerns

If you have any concerns about your heart health speak to your GP. Initially a blood test will be done to check for indications of heart failure. Further test would be required to understand the type of heart failure. These tests would include an electrocardiogram (ECG), an echocardiogram, breathing tests and a chest X-ray.

Treatment for a Heart Failure

The main ways to treat Heart Failure are

- Making changes to your lifestyle
- Using medication as prescribed and appropriate to your specific type of heart failure
- If your heart rhythm needs controlling a pacemaker implant may be used
- Various surgical options are also available

Managing and preventing Heart Failure

Lifestyle change is the most important means of managing your risk of heart failure and preventing deterioration of your condition.



Reduce alcohol consumption

Explore tips how to cut down and take up activities that reduce the chances of consuming alcohol e.g. meet friends at the gym and chat whilst you work out as opposed to meeting in the pub.



[Click here](#) for more information



Reduce or stop smoking

Smokers are encouraged to give it up as soon as possible. Find a buddy to support you. NHS support is offered free.



[Click here](#) for more information



Healthy eating

Eating a healthy balance diet can help you to keep a healthy weight, give you the energy and vitamins your body needs as well as helping you to feel your best. Cutting out sugary drinks and snacks and trying to maintain your "5 a day" is a great place to start. Most important is to reduce the amount of salt in meals.



[Click here](#) for more information



Reduce stress

You can learn how to deal with stress by clicking on the link below.



[Click here](#) for more information



Regular exercise

Check with relevant medical professional first. Taking regular exercise helps with managing weight and also with supporting good mental health. Think about a walking programme or enrol in cardiac rehabilitation course.



Take Notice

Learning mindfulness or relaxation techniques can help you manage your stress better and cope with the psychological symptoms you may experience.



Vaccination

Ensure that you have vaccination that will prevent other illness. The flu jab is recommended. Speak to your GP about it.



Sleep

Fatigue can be a significant symptom in heart failure - Learn techniques to promote a good night's sleep. Some tips include, removing any phones or screens from your bedroom (the blue light is really bad for sleep), don't fall asleep with the television on or not in bed and make sure you have a clean and aired environment.

Useful links

Reference



Click here to visit the British Heart Foundation
Website (link opens in new window)

Reference



Click here to visit the NHS for more information
Website (link opens in new window)

Reference



Click here to find your local support group
Website (link opens in new window)

Reference



Click here to learn more about ethnicity and heart disease
Website (link opens in new window)