



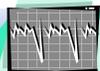
Visit your doctor to talk about your health and the medicines you may need. This factsheet will give you information about a type of medicine. You will learn what questions you should ask your doctor about this medicine. Don't be afraid to ask questions. It is very important for your health.

About Heart Failure

Heart failure is a disease where the heart cannot do a good job pumping blood to the rest of the body. The most common causes of heart failure are diseases or conditions that damage the heart. Some of these are coronary heart disease, diabetes, high blood pressure, and high cholesterol.

Heart failure does not have a cure. The good news is that there are tests to diagnose the disease early and there are medicines you can take to treat heart failure.

Heart failure can affect both children and adults, but it mostly affects older adults. This factsheet focuses on heart failure in adults. To learn more about heart failure and how doctors treat this disease, read the following information.



Can you prevent heart failure?

Yes. Some changes in your lifestyle can help. For example:



- Stop smoking
- Limit the amount of alcohol you drink
- Lose weight if you need to
- Exercise regularly
- Eat a healthy diet



- Visit your doctor to make sure you don't have heart problems. If you do have a disease that can lead to heart failure, make sure you get treatment.

Remember, it's important to detect heart failure as early as possible. The sooner you detect it, the better, so you can begin treatment.



How do you know if you have heart failure?

People with heart failure may have some of the following symptoms:

- Feel extremely tired
- Have shortness of breath when doing physical activity
- Have a hard time breathing
- Wheezing



- Cough a lot (especially at night)
- Gain weight for no reason
- Have swollen ankles and veins in the neck because of fluid that builds up in your body

Do not assume these symptoms are part of getting older. Go to the doctor and ask to be checked for heart failure. Your doctor may do a blood test and an echocardiogram to help determine if you have heart failure.



How do doctors treat heart failure?

Doctors use different types of medicines to treat heart failure. The type of medicine your doctor will prescribe for you will depend on how severe your symptoms are. In general, this is what doctors do:

- First, they prescribe a **diuretic**, if the person needs it
- Then, they prescribe an **ACE inhibitor**
- Last, they prescribe a **beta-blocker**



In the United States, “generic” medicines are just as good as brand-name medicines. They are just as safe and work just like the brand-name medicine, and they cost a lot less money. Ask your doctor if you can get a generic medicine instead of a brand-name medicine.

This is what these medicines do to help treat heart failure:

Diuretics:

- Help get rid of the extra fluids that make the feet and ankles swollen

ACE inhibitors:

- Relax blood vessels and make them wider so blood can flow more easily
- Reduce the possibility of an early death
- Slow down the progress of the disease



If you can't tolerate an ACE inhibitor the doctor may switch you to another type of medicine called **angiotensin receptor blockers** or **ARBs**. This medicine works similar to ACE inhibitors.

Beta-blockers:

- Protect the heart by slowing down the heartbeat
- Reduce the possibility of an early death
- Improve the quality of life of the person with heart failure

In addition to prescribing medicines, your doctor may also recommend that you:

- Avoid taking medicines that can make heart failure worse, such as *ibuprofen* and *naproxen*, and some diabetes medicines such as *pioglitazone* (brand-name *Actos*) and *rosiglitazone* (brand-name *Avandia*).
- Cut back on salt. Salt makes the body retain water. This forces the heart to pump harder.
- Exercise as much as you can.



Medicines used to treat heart failure

This table shows examples of the medicines that are commonly used to treat heart failure:

Type of Medicine	Generic and Brand-name Medicines
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Diuretics 	<p><i>Bumetanide</i> (brand-name <i>Bumex</i>) <i>Furosemide</i> (brand-name <i>Lasix</i>)</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ACE Inhibitors 	<p><i>Captopril</i> (brand-name <i>Capoten</i>) <i>Enalapril</i> (brand-name <i>Vasotec</i>) <i>Lisinopril</i> (brand-name <i>Prinivil, Zestril</i>)</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ARBs 	<p><i>Candesartan</i> (brand-name <i>Atacand</i>) <i>Losartan</i> (brand-name <i>Cozaar</i>) <i>Valsartan</i> (brand-name <i>Diovan</i>)</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Beta-blockers* 	<p><i>Bisoprolol</i> (brand-name <i>Zebeta</i>) <i>Carvedilol</i> (brand-name <i>Coreg</i>) <i>Metoprolol succinate</i> (brand-name <i>Toprol XL</i>)</p>

***Note:** People who are treated with a beta-blocker for heart failure must be monitored carefully by a doctor (cardiologist) because they are at high risk of complications.



How to Get the Best Price for Your Medicines

- **Ask for a generic:** Tell your pharmacist you want a generic medicine instead of the brand-name. You will pay less for a generic. Not all brand-name medicines have a generic, but many do.
- **Compare prices:** Call or visit three different pharmacies. Give them the name of the medicine and ask how much it costs. Ask if they have a drug discount program that can help you pay less for your medicine. Buy your medicine from the pharmacy that gives you the cheapest price.
- **Sign up for patient assistance programs:** Most companies that make medicines have programs that help people that don't have a lot of money and do not have insurance to get brand-name medicines for free or at a low cost. The Partnership for Prescription Assistance can help you find a program: www.pparx.org or 1-888-477-2669.

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