

Facts about Heart Failure

Heart Failure

Heart failure is when the heart can't pump enough blood to the body's other organs. It happens because the heart muscle is damaged or overworked.

Some Causes of Heart Failure

Heart failure can be caused by:

- High blood pressure
- Heart valve disease
- Heart muscle disease
- Heart or blood vessel defects present since birth
- Heart valve infection
- Heart muscle infection
- Clogged arteries
- Past heart attack

A failing heart does not work as well as it should. People with heart failure can't exert themselves. They become short of breath and tired.

As the flow of blood out of the heart slows, blood going back to the heart through the veins backs up. This causes the tissues to become clogged and leads to swelling. Most often the legs and ankles swell, but other parts of the body can also swell. Sometimes fluid collects in the lungs, making it hard to breathe. It is especially hard to breathe when lying down.

Heart failure also affects the kidneys' ability to rid the body of salt and water. This leads to more swelling.

Symptoms of Heart Failure

The most common signs of heart failure are:

- Swollen legs or ankles
- Difficulty breathing

There may be weight gain when fluid builds up.

Heart failure usually needs a treatment

Program that includes:

- Rest
- Proper diet
- A change in daily activities
- Medicine

Drug Treatment of Heart Failure

Many medicines are used to treat heart failure.

Some of the most common types include:

- Angiotensin-converting enzyme (ACE) inhibitors
- Angiotensin II receptor blockers (ARBs)
- Beta-blockers
- Diuretics