

What Is Heart Failure?

If you have heart failure, you're not alone.

About 6.7 million American adults are living with it. In fact, it's one of the most common reasons people age 65 and older go into the hospital. It can take years for heart failure to develop.

Heart failure symptoms usually develop over time as your heart becomes weaker and less able to pump the blood that your body needs. Heart failure usually results in an enlarged heart (left ventricle).

Heart failure is a serious long-term (chronic) condition. But you can live a full, active life with the right medical treatment and attention to your lifestyle.

What can I do to manage my heart failure?

- Follow your health care professional's advice.
- Quit smoking, if you smoke.
- Take your medications as prescribed.
- Weigh yourself daily to watch for sudden weight gain.
- Track your daily fluid intake.
- Monitor your blood pressure daily.
- Lose or maintain your weight based on your health care professional's recommendations.
- Avoid or limit alcohol and caffeine.
- Follow a heart-healthy diet.
- Reduce your sodium (salt) intake.
- Be physically active.
- Get enough rest.