

HEART HEALTH

How To Succeed At Surviving Heart Failure

(NAPSA)—The latest statistics from the American Heart Association (AHA), one of the world's oldest and largest voluntary organizations dedicated to fighting heart disease and stroke, show that the number of people living with heart failure has now topped more than 6 million—and that number is expected to rise to more than 8 million by 2030.

Much of that increase can be attributed to medical advances that have improved survival rates of heart attacks and other conditions that can lead to heart failure.

“The ability to treat this condition, restore health and quality of life, extend life and, most importantly, prevent this condition is more robust now than ever,” said Clyde W. Yancy, M.D., past president of the AHA and chief of cardiology and Magerstadt professor at Northwestern University, Feinberg School of Medicine, Chicago. “Prevention is a key consideration as one of every five adults alive at age 40 will develop heart failure during his or her lifetime.”

Heart failure is a condition in which the heart is too weak to pump blood sufficiently throughout the body. Knowing the signs and symptoms of heart failure is critical—the earlier someone seeks care for heart failure, the better the chances of living a longer, more active life.

Symptoms

- Difficulty breathing
- Persistent coughing or wheezing
- Fatigue
- Nausea
- Confusion
- Fainting or near-fainting
- Increased heart rate
- Swelling of the feet, ankles and legs.

People experiencing more than one of these should talk with their doctor about a heart evaluation. There's usually no cure for heart failure but it can be managed.

Treatments

- **Lifestyle Changes:** Certain lifestyle changes can help alleviate symptoms, slow disease progression and improve everyday life. These changes could include quitting smoking, losing or maintaining weight, eating a heart-healthy diet, being physically active, managing stress and getting adequate rest.
- **Regular Monitoring:** It's very important for people with heart failure to monitor their symptoms and report any changes to their health care team.



More people these days are living with heart failure. The more you know, the better you can manage the condition.

This may involve daily weigh-ins to track water retention, closely watching swelling, and monitoring changes in ability to exercise.

- **Medications and Devices:** Heart failure patients often need multiple medications. There are devices that can control heart rhythm or measure circulation. It's important that patients and caregivers work with their health care team to understand the medications and how they should be taken. Understanding the devices is also important.
- **Surgery:** Surgery is sometimes recommended when a doctor can identify a correctable problem, such as a congenital defect, valve abnormality or blocked coronary artery. When heart failure is advanced, the use of an artificial pump to sustain circulation or heart transplantation to replace the failing heart can be done today with much less risk than ever before and improved outcomes.

The most important thing, suggested Dr. Yancy, is to work closely with a heart failure team and follow its advice. “Research today is pointing to new directions to restore the heart's function, capture early warning signs and create highly personalized treatment plans,” he said. “There is no reason to ever again accept ‘failure’ as a diagnosis. With the right team in place exercising best care options, nearly everyone with this condition can now thrive.”

Learn More

For facts about heart failure, and free tools to help you prevent and better manage the disease, visit www.RiseAboveHF.org. The American Heart Association's Rise Above Heart Failure initiative is nationally supported by Novartis Pharmaceuticals Corporation. To learn more about heart health or to get involved, visit www.heart.org.