

# HEART HEALTH

## February is Heart Month: Innovations in Heart Failure Care

(NAPSA)—Heart failure affects more than 5 million Americans. It is a chronic, progressive disease in which the heart's ability to pump blood is reduced and the heart does not pump enough blood for the body's need for oxygen. Knowing a few facts can be important to the health of heart failure patients.

### When the Risk for Hospitalization is Highest

Each year, more than 1 million people are hospitalized for heart failure and of those, 250,000 will be re-hospitalized within 30 days. According to a recent study published in the *Journal of Cardiac Failure*, there is a significant increase in heart failure hospitalizations following popular events and holidays such as Super Bowl Sunday, the Fourth of July and Christmas, among others.

### Signs and Symptoms

Understanding what to watch for is an important part of staying heart healthy. Heart failure symptoms are not always obvious. Some people in the very early stages of the disease may have no symptoms at all, but common symptoms include:

- Shortness of breath
- Swelling of the feet and legs
- Lack of energy, feeling tired
- Difficulty sleeping at night due to breathing problems
- Swollen or tender abdomen, loss of appetite
- Cough with "frothy" mucus or phlegm
- Increased urination at night
- Confusion
- Impaired memory

### What You Can Do

Only your doctor can tell if you have heart failure and how far the condition has progressed. If you or someone you care about experiences any of these symptoms, talk with a doctor. They will review your medical history, including past and present illnesses, family history and lifestyle. As part of your physical examination, the doctor will check your heart, lungs, abdomen and legs to see if signs of heart failure are present. Also ask your doctor about an important key indicator of heart

The impact of heart failure is staggering<sup>2,14,16</sup>

5.1 million Americans suffer from HF<sup>14</sup>

And 50% die within 5 years<sup>2</sup>



1 million hospitalizations per year<sup>15</sup>

Of that group, approximately 25% will be readmitted within 30 days<sup>16</sup>

#### References

<sup>2</sup> Roger VL, et al. *JAMA*. 2004;292:344-350.

<sup>14</sup> Go AS, et al. *Circulation*. 2013;127:e6-e245.

<sup>15</sup> Bradley EH, et al. *Circ Cardiovasc Qual Outcomes*. 2013;6:444-450.

<sup>16</sup> Six Steps Could Cut Heart Failure Readmissions. *Circ Cardiovasc Qual Outcomes*. American Heart Association. 2013. Accessed online at <http://newsroom.heart.org/news/six-steps-could-cut-heart-failure-readmissions/>

health called ejection fraction, which can help to diagnose heart failure and determine the best treatment plan.

### What Doctors Can Do

Common treatment for heart failure includes medical therapy and lifestyle modifications. For some patients, many cardiology leaders say cardiac resynchronization therapy (CRT), a device-based treatment that may help improve the pumping function of the heart, can be a beneficial option.

Specifically, a CRT device is a type of pacemaker or defibrillator, implanted under the skin of the upper chest, with thin wires called leads that connect the device to the heart. These leads deliver electrical pulses to keep the ventricles (bottom chambers of the heart) beating in a synchronized rhythm. In some patients, this helps improve the overall pumping efficiency of the heart, which lessens the symptoms of heart failure and has also been shown to improve quality of life and increase lifespan. CRT is not for everyone, and not everyone who receives an implanted device benefits from the therapy.

### Help Is Available

To give patients the most comprehensive approach to the management of heart failure, many hospitals are electing to use the newest CRT technology from Medtronic, the Viva® CRT-defibril-

lator and Viva® CRT-pacemaker, which include the AdaptivCRT® algorithm, a technology that preserves normal heart rhythms and automatically adjusts to the patient's needs minute-by-minute, creating a customized therapy for each patient.

According to *The New England Journal of Medicine*, clinical studies have shown CRT reduces mortality and heart failure hospitalizations. With AdaptivCRT, patients have demonstrated a 21 percent reduction in heart failure hospitalizations as compared to historical CRT trials.

In addition, AdaptivCRT has also been shown to reduce heart failure 30-day readmissions following a heart failure hospitalization, an unfortunate yet common occurrence among heart failure patients, by 47 percent.

Medtronic devices have been safely and effectively used for more than a decade to treat patients with mildly symptomatic, moderate or severe heart failure.

### Learn More

Heart failure patients and their caregivers should talk with their cardiologist about the benefits and risks associated with the latest tools in heart failure management and if CRT is an appropriate option. For more information about cardiac resynchronization therapy, visit [www.medtronic.com/heartfailureinfo](http://www.medtronic.com/heartfailureinfo).

