



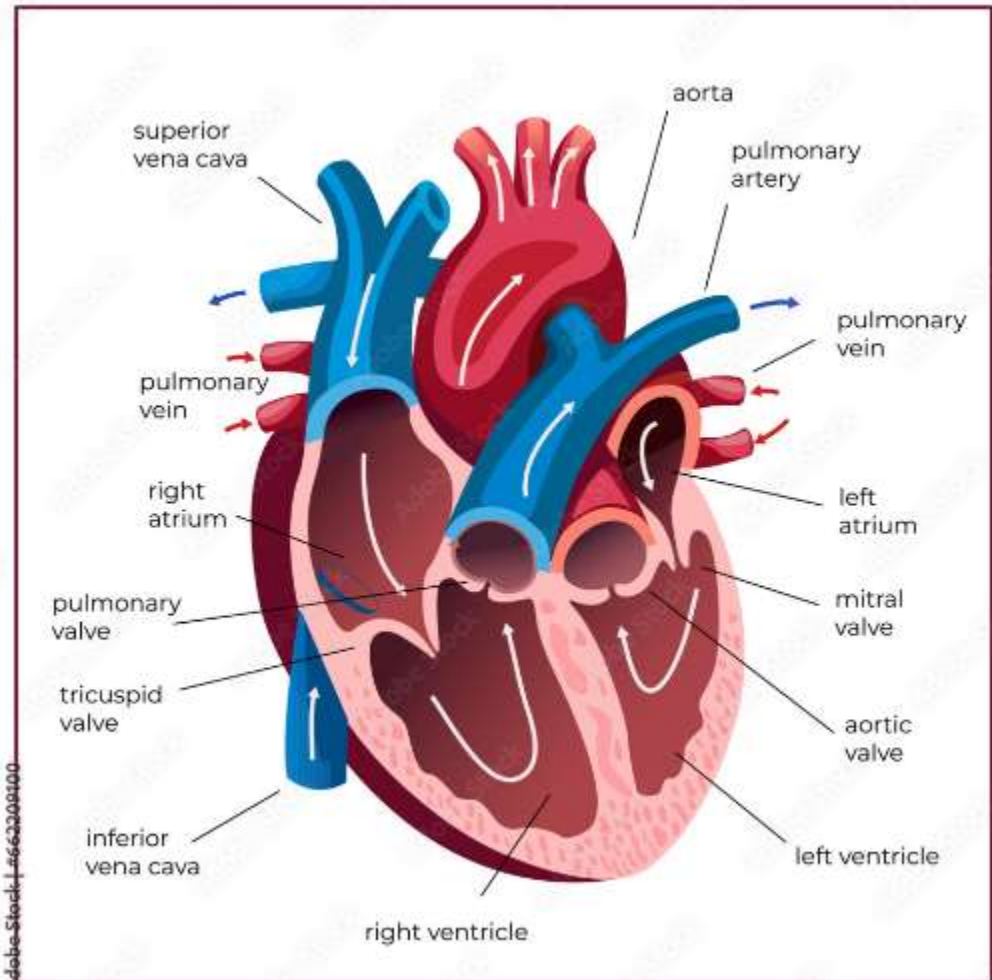
Heart Failure Patient Guide

Comprehensive Education and Management Resources

Society for Heart Failure and Transplantation

Patient Resources • March 2026

Understanding Heart Failure







What is Heart Failure?

- ♥ **Heart failure** occurs when the heart muscle cannot pump blood effectively to meet the body's needs.
- 📈 The condition affects over **6.2 million adults** in the United States according to recent CDC data.
- 👤 **Ejection fraction (EF)** measures how much blood the left ventricle pumps with each heartbeat.
- ⚠️ Heart failure can develop suddenly (acute) or gradually over time (chronic) due to various underlying conditions.

Important: Heart failure doesn't mean your heart has stopped working - it means your heart isn't pumping as well as it should to supply your body with oxygen-rich blood.

Heart Failure Symptoms Recognition

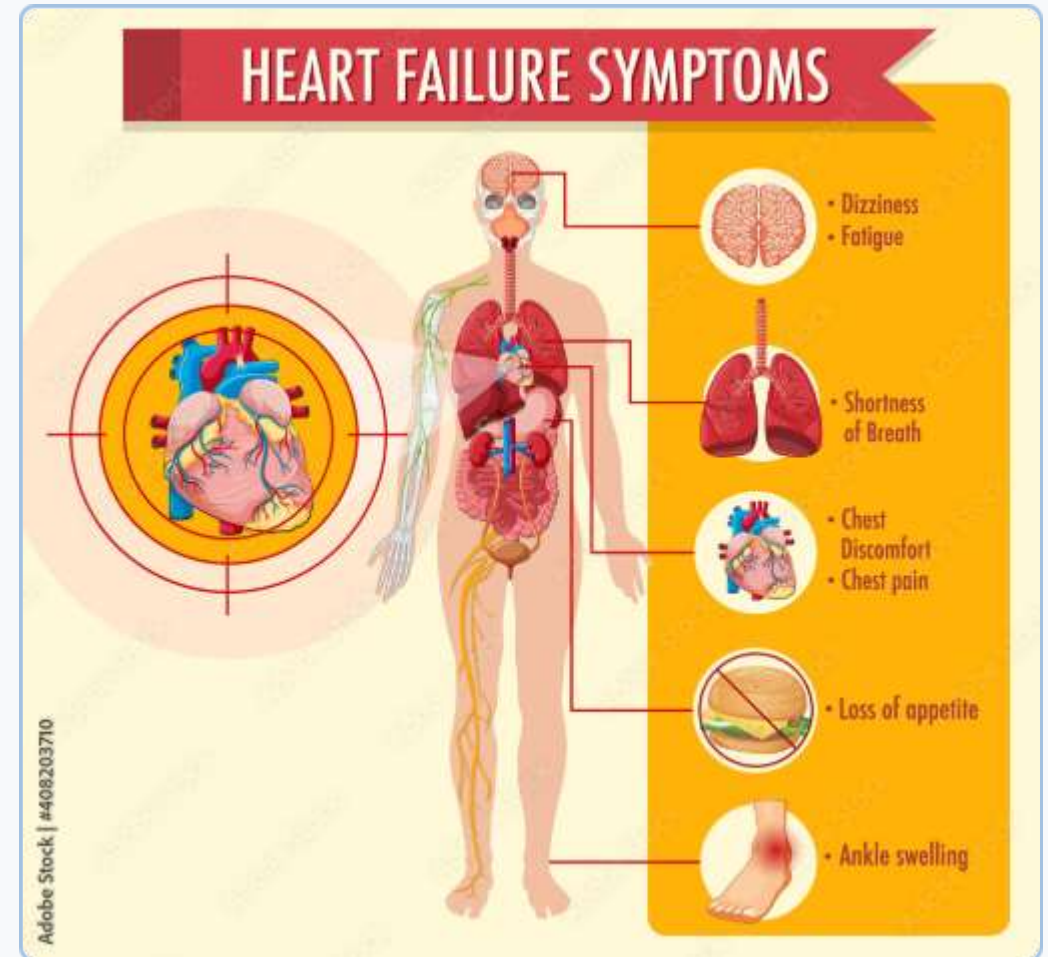
Common Heart Failure Symptoms

-  **Shortness of breath (dyspnea)** during activity or when lying flat, indicating fluid buildup in lungs.
-  **Rapid weight gain** of 2+ pounds in one day or 5+ pounds in one week due to fluid retention.
-  **Persistent fatigue** and reduced exercise tolerance affecting daily activities.
-  **Irregular heartbeat** or palpitations, chest pain, and persistent cough with phlegm.

⚠ Call 911 Immediately If You Experience:


- Severe shortness of breath that doesn't improve with rest
- Chest pain or pressure lasting more than a few minutes
- Fainting, dizziness, or confusion
- Rapid, irregular heartbeat with chest discomfort


Important: Heart failure symptoms can worsen gradually. Monitor symptoms daily and contact your healthcare provider if you notice changes.





Daily Monitoring Guidelines


Daily Self-Monitoring Checklist


 **Daily Weight:** Weigh yourself every morning after urinating and before breakfast. Record weight in your log.

 **Breathing Check:** Note any shortness of breath at rest, with activity, or when lying down.

 **Swelling Assessment:** Check feet, ankles, legs, and abdomen for new or worsening swelling.

 **Energy Level:** Monitor your energy and ability to perform usual daily activities.

 **Medication Adherence:** Take all prescribed medications as directed and track in your medication log.

 **Sodium Intake:** Follow prescribed sodium restrictions (typically 2000mg daily) and monitor fluid intake.

GREEN ZONE - All Clear

Weight stable within 3 lbs of dry weight. No new symptoms.
Continue current care plan.

YELLOW ZONE - Caution

Weight gain 2-5 lbs or mild symptom changes. Call healthcare provider today.

RED ZONE - Emergency

Weight gain >5 lbs, severe breathing difficulty, or chest pain. Call 911 immediately.

Emergency Contact Information

Healthcare Provider: _____ Phone: _____ Emergency:
911 | After Hours: _____