



# Living with Heart Failure

## Your Heart is a Muscle

Your heart is a muscle that pumps oxygen rich blood throughout your body. When you have heart failure, it means that your heart muscle doesn't pump as much blood to meet your body's blood and oxygen needs. Heart failure does not mean that your heart has stopped beating. It means that your heart isn't pumping as well as it should.

When you have heart failure, your body will try to make up for your heart's decreased ability to pump. It may do such a good job in the beginning that you don't notice you have a disease. Over time, however, your body will be unable to keep up and you will experience symptoms from heart failure. These are some ways your body can make up for the decrease in blood pumped from the heart:

- The heart muscle gets bigger.
- The heart pumps faster to get more blood into the body.
- Your body will hold onto (retain) salt and water to increase the amount of fluid in the blood.

## Types of Heart Failure

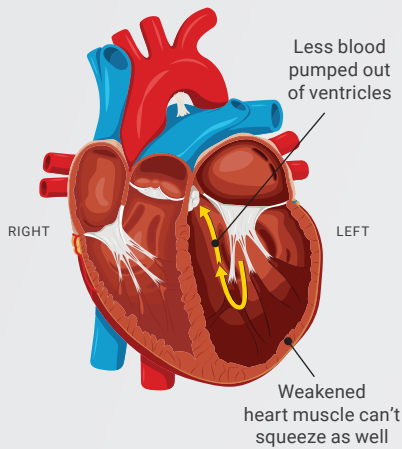
There are two different types of heart failure (see image on next page). The left ventricle is the last place where the blood goes in the heart, just before the heart pumps that blood into the rest of the body. When this part of the heart does not work properly, it can affect how much blood your heart pumps out with each beat. Your healthcare team measures how much blood is pumped out as a percentage called the "ejection fraction."

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## Causes of Heart Failure

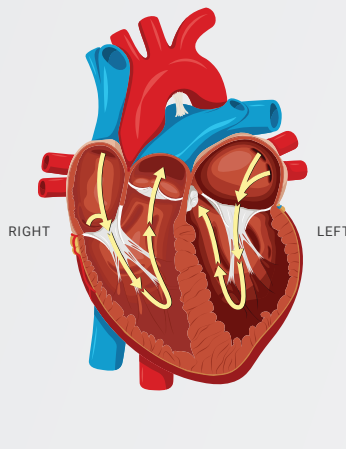
Heart failure is common, affecting about 6.2 million adults in the United States. Heart failure occurs from different conditions that cause damage to the heart, including:

- Heart attack
- High blood pressure
- Coronary artery disease
- Diabetes
- Chemotherapy
- Heart problems you were born with
- Alcohol and recreational drugs (i.e., methamphetamine, cocaine, heroin)
- Infection of a heart valve
- Infection or inflammation of the heart muscle
- Fast, slow or irregular heart rhythms, including the common heart rhythm disorder atrial fibrillation



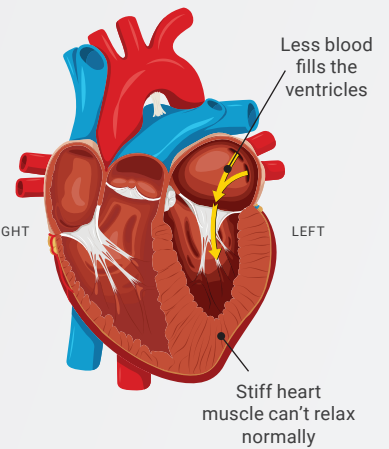
### Heart Failure with Reduced Ejection Fraction

This type of heart failure is caused by a thin and weak heart muscle. The ejection fraction is low, meaning the heart pumps out less than 40% of blood with each beat.



### Normal Heart

A normally functioning heart is able to pump and fill well. Notice that the wall of the muscle is not too thick or too thin. The ejection fraction is between 55-75%.



### Heart Failure with Preserved Ejection Fraction

This type of heart failure is caused by a thickened and stiff heart muscle. Even though the ejection fraction is "preserved" and typically greater than 50%, the stiff muscle makes it hard for the left ventricle to relax enough to fill with blood.

## Symptoms of Heart Failure

You will work closely with your healthcare team to manage symptoms from heart failure. Symptoms occur because of the damage to the heart and the buildup of fluid in the body. This can affect your breathing, energy levels and your ability to do your daily activities.

There is no cure for heart failure, but there are many treatment options. Your healthcare team will work with you on a plan that can help you feel better, live longer and have a more active life.

HEART FAILURE SYMPTOMS INCLUDE:	
	<b>Short of breath or trouble breathing</b>
	<b>Feeling tired when you do everyday activities, such as getting dressed or walking across a room</b>
	<b>Swelling in ankles, feet, legs or stomach</b>
	<b>Weight gain from the extra fluid in your body</b>
	<b>Cough or shortness of breath that gets worse when lying down</b>
	<b>Feeling bloated or less hungry</b>
	<b>Dizzy or feeling faint</b>

References:

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 Virani SS, Alonso A, Benjamin EJ, Bittencourt MS, Callaway CW, Carson AP, et al. Heart disease and stroke statistics—2020 update: a report from the American Heart Association. *Circulation*. 2020;141(9):e139-596.