



# Congestive Heart Failure

A PATIENT EDUCATION GUIDE



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## Levels of CHF

Levels of congestive heart failure range from mild to very severe. Each level may limit a person's activities more and more. With very severe heart failure, a person may be short of breath or feel fatigued even at rest.

## Signs and Symptoms

The sluggish flow of oxygen-rich blood to the body's muscles and organs causes the symptoms of heart failure. Fluid is pushed (collects) in the lungs or other body parts, like the feet, ankles, legs, liver, and bowels.

Usually, the symptoms of heart failure begin slowly. At first, you may only notice them when you are active. Over time, you may have breathing problems and other symptoms even at rest.

Heart failure symptoms, however, may begin suddenly after a heart attack or other heart problem.

### **The following are symptoms of congestive heart failure:**

- Weight gain
- Shortness of breath with activity, or after lying down for a while
- Cough
- Swelling of feet and ankles
- Swelling of the abdomen
- Irregular or rapid pulse
- Sensation of feeling the heartbeat (palpitations)
- Difficulty sleeping
- Fatigue, weakness, faintness
- Loss of appetite, indigestion

### **Other symptoms may include:**

- Decreased alertness or concentration
- Decreased urine production
- Nausea and vomiting
- Need to urinate at night

