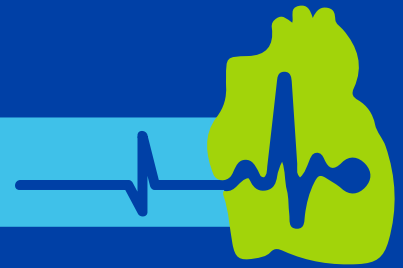


CONGESTIVE HEART FAILURE



THE HEART

The heart is a muscle that pumps blood through all the body. It has two muscle that work in perfect synchronization. Both sides of the heart pump the same amount of blood with each beat.

The left side of the heart receives the oxygenated blood and is in charge of pumping it to the body organs and the extremities (hands and feet) the brain and to all the other parts of the body. After the body uses the oxygen, the blood returns to the right side of the heart and the cycle begins again.

CONGESTIVE HEART FAILURE... WHAT IS IT?

It is defined as the difficulty of the heart to move and pump the amount of blood in the body, which causes a congestion (an accumulation of fluid).

SYMPTOMS

- Shortness of breath, gasping or coughing when performing tasks
- Weakness or tiredness
- Breathing difficulty when lying flat (Orthopnea)
- Interruption of sleep by cough and shortness of breath (Dyspnea)
- Reduced ability to exercise
- Need to urinate more at night (Nocturia)
- Dizziness

SIGNALS THAT MAY BE FOUND BY THE PHYSICIAN

- Weak pulse
- Cold extremities
- Excessive sudoration
- Pronounced jugular vein
- Fluid in the lungs (Rales)
- Tachicardia
- Enlargement of the liver
- Accumulation of fluids

CAUSES

- Abuse of alcohol, drugs and medications
- Hereditary factor
- Smoking
- High blood pressure
- Diabetes
- Kidney problems
- Overweight
- Influenza or pneumonia
- Heart muscle disease and/or heart attacks
- Problems with heart valves
- Heart arteries diseases

SCREENING TESTS

There are two types of screening tests. Those to diagnose the initial cause of the disease and those that allow to see the extent of the damage to the heart:

- Echocardiogram
- Nuclear studies
- Catheterism
- Electrocardiogram
- Chest X-rays

ACTION PLAN

- Limit the consumption of liquids to less than one liter daily . This includes coffee, beverages, soup, etc.
- Use your medications regularly. Among them: Betablockers, Diuretics, Antiarrhythmic therapy, ACE Inhibitors, Anticoagulants, Vasodilators.
- Remember to take your pills at the same time everyday and always read medications labels.
- Monitor your weight: Report any weight gain of 3 to 5 pounds a week. It is important to verify if you are retaining fluids.

MODIFYING YOUR LIFESTYLES WILL DELAY THE SYMPTOMS AND CONSEQUENCES OF THE CONDITION

- Do not smoke
- Don't drink alcohol, or use drugs
- Keep a diet low in fat and salt (less than a teaspoon daily).
- Do low impact exercises regularly such as walking for 30 minutes.
- Always consult your physician.

CONGESTIVE HEART FAILURE MAINLY AFFECTS PRINCIPALLY MEN ANDWOMEN AGED 65 AND OLDER.