

Know the signs of heart failure

Heart failure happens when the heart cannot pump blood as strongly or efficiently as it should be. Your heart is still working, but the body may not get enough oxygen and nutrients, and fluid can build up in the lungs, legs, and other tissues.

What causes heart failure?

Common causes of heart failure can include:

- Damage from heart attack or coronary artery disease
- High blood pressure (hypertension)
- Heart valve problems
- Cardiomyopathy (diseases of the heart muscle, sometimes inherited or caused by infections, toxins, or long-term alcohol use)
- Arrhythmias (irregular heart rhythms)
- Other health conditions like diabetes, thyroid problems, chronic kidney disease (CKD), or severe lung disease
- Lifestyle factors like smoking, obesity, lack of exercise, and excessive alcohol

What is the connection between heart failure and CKD?

Heart failure and CKD are closely connected because the heart and kidneys work together to move blood and remove extra fluid. When the heart is weak, less blood reaches the kidneys. This can damage them and lead to or worsen CKD. When the kidneys aren't working well, they can't remove extra fluid. That extra fluid makes the heart work harder and can worsen heart failure.

They also share common risk factors like high blood pressure, diabetes, and obesity, so many people have both conditions. Finding symptoms early and treating these conditions together can help protect both the heart and kidneys and support better long-term health.



What are the symptoms of heart failure?

The symptoms of heart failure may develop slowly or come on suddenly and can include:

- Shortness of breath, especially with activity or when lying flat
- Fatigue or weakness
- Swelling in the legs, ankles, feet, or abdomen
- Rapid weight gain from fluid buildup
- Persistent cough or wheezing
- Feeling full or bloated, loss of appetite
- Increased urination at night
- Fast or irregular heartbeat

How is heart failure diagnosed?

Your doctor will talk to you about your symptoms and perform a physical examination. They may also use blood tests, exercise stress tests, chest X-rays, an electrocardiogram (EKG), or an echocardiogram.

How is heart failure treated?

Early treatment and management of heart failure can help slow the progression and reduce hospitalizations. Treatment often includes:

- Controlling blood pressure
- Managing fluid and salt intake
- Treating underlying conditions like high blood pressure, CKD, obesity, and diabetes
- Taking medications that support both heart and kidney health
- Making lifestyle changes such as regular physical activity, healthy eating, maintaining a healthy weight, stopping use of tobacco products, and limiting or stopping alcohol use



We are here to help

Your care team can help answer your questions about heart failure. Reach out for any support you need.