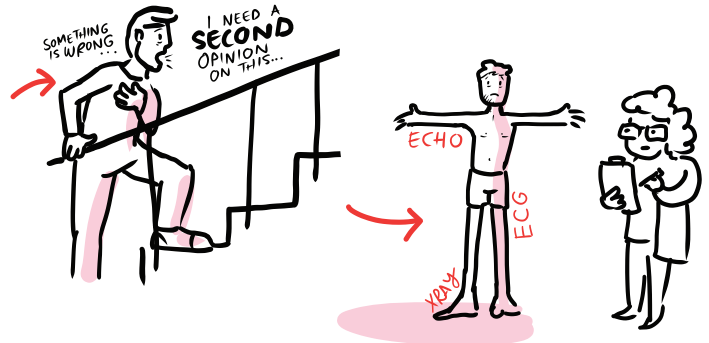


# Heart Failure: What You Need to Know

## What is Heart Failure?

Heart failure (HF) is a condition where the **heart does not pump blood effectively**, making it harder for your body to get the oxygen and nutrients it needs. This can lead to symptoms like **fatigue, shortness of breath, and swelling** in the legs, ankles, or feet. While heart failure is a serious condition, with the right **treatment and lifestyle changes**, many people live well with it.



## Recognizing the Symptoms

### Heart Failure Symptoms:

- 1 Shortness of breath** – Especially during activity or when lying down.
- 2 Fatigue** – Feeling more tired than usual, even after resting.
- 3 Swelling** – In the legs, ankles, feet, or stomach due to fluid buildup.
- 4 Rapid heartbeat** – A racing or irregular heartbeat.
- 5 Sudden weight gain** – An increase of **2-3 lbs in a day or 5 lbs in a week** due to fluid retention.

## Why Early Diagnosis Matters

Detecting heart failure early helps prevent serious complications like hospitalizations or worsening symptoms. Regular check-ups and knowing your risk factors can help with early diagnosis.

### Risk Factors Include:

- High blood pressure
- Diabetes
- Coronary artery disease
- Family history of heart failure
- Obesity or an inactive lifestyle

## How is Heart Failure Diagnosed?

Doctors use various tests to confirm heart failure, including:

- **NT-proBNP Blood Test** – Measures a hormone released by the heart when under stress. Higher levels indicate heart failure.
- **Echocardiogram (Echo)** – An ultrasound of the heart to check how well it pumps blood.
- **Electrocardiogram (ECG/EKG)** – Checks heart rhythm and electrical activity.
- **Stress Test** – Monitors heart function during physical activity.



# Treatment Options for Heart Failure

## Medications:

- **ACE Inhibitors / ARBs / ARNIs** – Help relax blood vessels, making it easier for the heart to pump.
- **Beta-blockers** – Slow the heart rate and improve function.
- **Mineralocorticoid Receptor Antagonists (MRAs)** – Help reduce fluid buildup and prevent further heart damage. Examples: Spironolactone, Eplerenone.
- **Diuretics (Water Pills)** – Reduce fluid buildup to relieve swelling and breathing problems.
- **SGLT2 Inhibitors** – Newer medications that improve heart failure outcomes, even in people without diabetes.

## Lifestyle Tips:

- **Eat a heart-healthy diet** – Reduce **salt**, avoid processed foods, and focus on **fruits, vegetables, and lean proteins**.
- **Stay active** – Gentle activities like **walking** can strengthen the heart.
- **Monitor symptoms daily** – Keep track of **weight, swelling, and breathing** to detect changes early.
- **Quit smoking & limit alcohol** – Reduces strain on the heart.

## Living Well with Heart Failure

Heart failure is manageable with the right care plan. Talk to your healthcare provider and ask:

- ✓ What stage of heart failure do I have?
- ✓ What medications are best for me?
- ✓ Are there lifestyle changes I should make?
- ✓ How can I monitor my symptoms at home?

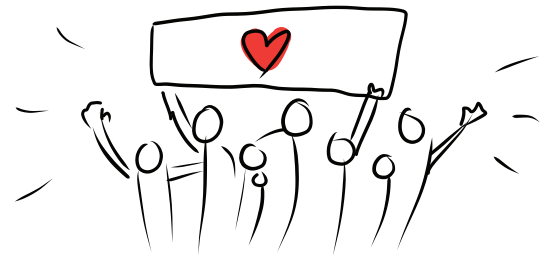
## Take Action Today

**You are not alone!** Support is available. At **HeartLife Foundation**, we provide **education, community, and advocacy** for people living with heart failure.

For more support, information and resources, visit **heartlife.ca**, a leading patient led heart health charity.

### HeartLife Foundation

Canada's patient-led heart failure charity  
"It's About Life, Not Failure™"



## Mission

The HeartLife Foundation is a patient-driven charity whose mission is to transform the quality of life for people living with cardiovascular diseases by engaging, educating, and empowering a global community. We aim to create lasting solutions, drive innovation, and build healthier lives for patients, caregivers, and families worldwide.

**For more information on Heart failure and other support please visit us at**  
**[heartlife.ca/academy/](http://heartlife.ca/academy/)**  
**[heartlife.academy](http://heartlife.academy)**



**[www.heartlife.ca](http://www.heartlife.ca)**

It's About Life, Not Failure™  
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