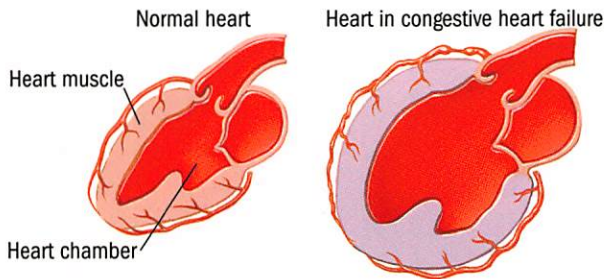
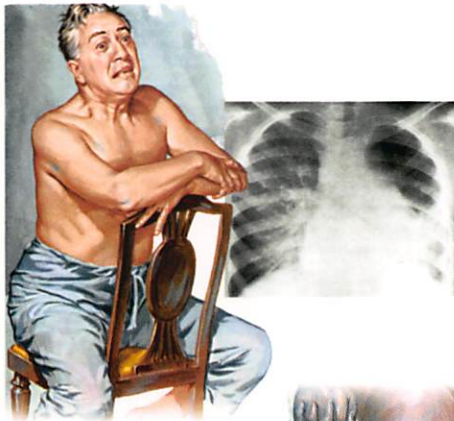


# MANAGING YOUR CONGESTIVE HEART FAILURE (CHF)



In CHF, the heart cannot pump enough blood to organs and tissues. Blood backs up in one side of the heart causing the other side to work harder.



Symptoms of left-sided CHF include shortness of breath and fluid in lungs. Patients may feel better sitting up than lying down.



Symptoms of right-sided CHF include swelling of the legs and feet.



The doctor listens to the lungs for fluid buildup. Patients may be short of breath, and lips and nails may look blue.

## What Is Congestive Heart Failure (CHF)?

CHF is a condition in which the heart cannot (fails to) pump enough blood to organs and tissues. One side of the heart (or both sides) cannot force enough blood out, so blood backs up. Congestion, or abnormal buildup of fluid, occurs in tissues or organs, and blood doesn't move well through the vascular system.

If the left side of the heart fails, the system on the right side becomes congested. The congested side of the heart must work harder and may also fail. The same thing can happen on the right side.

## What Causes CHF?

Diseases that stress heart muscle can cause CHF. These conditions include high blood pressure, heart attack, heart muscle and valve diseases, infections, arrhythmias (abnormal heart rhythms), anemia, thyroid disease, pulmonary disease, and too much fluid in the body.

## What Are the Symptoms of CHF?

In the left side of the heart fails, fluid leaks into the lungs. Fatigue (tiredness), difficulty breathing (especially at night when lying down), coughing, or shortness of breath can result.

In right-sided heart failure, the liver swells, which may cause pain in the abdomen (belly). Legs and feet may swell also.

## How Is CHF Diagnosed?

A physical examination will show changes, such as swelling in the legs or crackling breath sounds, indicating excess fluid in the lungs.

A chest x-ray can show an enlarged heart and signs of fluid accumulation into the lungs. An echocardiogram (a test using sound waves to show the moving heart) can also reveal heart size and disease of the heart muscle or valve problems.