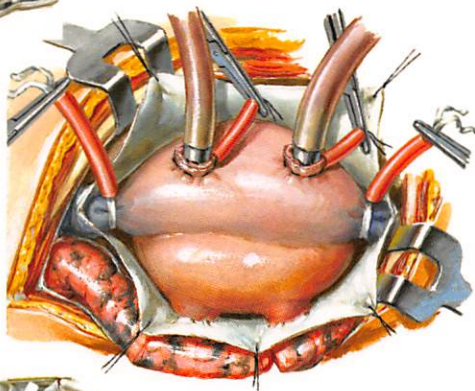




Exercise training helps improve or even reverses symptoms of CHF. Your doctor can guide you about the right level of exercise intensity to benefit your health and avoid strain.



If the cause of your CHF was a valve problem, valve surgery may be needed.



Make lifestyle changes: stop smoking, keep to a normal weight, and reduce salt and fluid intake. Take your medicine as instructed.

## How Is CHF Treated?

Initial symptoms should be managed so the failing heart doesn't have to work as hard.

The cause of CHF also needs treatment. For example, if a heart valve problem is the cause, surgery may be needed to repair or replace the valve. Lifestyle changes will be needed. Smoking lowers the blood oxygen level and makes the heart work harder, so avoid tobacco. Less fluid and salt in the diet reduces fluid in the body. Also, losing weight will help. Dietitians and nutritionists can help plan a diet.

Oxygen may be given to reduce the workload on the lungs.

Medicines may be prescribed to reduce fluid in the body or help the ventricle contract better. Diuretics remove fluid. Nitrates open blood vessels so blood flows more easily. Angiotensin-converting enzyme (ACE) inhibitors help the ventricle contract. Beta-blockers help by slowing the heart rate. Other drugs reduce blood pressure. All may have side effects, including dehydration, cough, dizziness, fainting, and fatigue.

## DOs and DON'Ts in Managing Heart Failure:

- ✓ **DO** take your medicines properly.
- ✓ **DO** maintain your ideal body weight.
- ✓ **DO** reduce salt and extra fluid in your diet.
- ✓ **DO** get your family involved in your care, especially the needed lifestyle changes.
- ✓ **DO** call your doctor if you have side effects from your drugs or new or worsening symptoms, such as increasing shortness of breath, chest pain, or fainting.
- ⊘ **DON'T** forget to take all your medicines as directed.
- ⊘ **DON'T** smoke.
- ⊘ **DON'T** stop taking any medicines without telling your doctor.

### FROM THE DESK OF

#### NOTES

#### FOR MORE INFORMATION

Contact the following sources:

- American Heart Association  
Tel: (800) 242-8721  
Web: [www.americanheart.org](http://www.americanheart.org)