

# health awareness



A COUNTY HEALTH POOL PUBLICATION

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## HEART DISEASE AWARENESS

**H**ear failure affects nearly 6 million Americans. Roughly 670,000 people are diagnosed with heart failure each year. It is the leading cause of hospitalization in people older than 65.

### What Is Heart Failure?

Heart failure does not mean the heart has stopped working. Rather, it means that the heart's pumping power is weaker than normal. With heart failure, blood moves through the heart and body at a slower rate, and pressure in the heart increases.

As a result, the heart cannot pump enough oxygen and nutrients to meet the body's needs. The chambers of the heart may respond by stretching to hold more blood to pump through the body or by becoming stiff and thickened. This helps to

keep the blood moving, but the heart muscle walls may eventually weaken and become unable to pump as efficiently.

As a result, the kidneys may respond by causing the body to retain fluid (water) and salt. If fluid builds up in the arms, legs, ankles, feet, lungs, or other organs, the body becomes congested, and congestive heart failure is the term used to describe the condition.

### What Causes Heart Failure?

Heart failure is caused by many conditions that damage the heart muscle, including:

- Coronary artery disease. Coronary artery disease (CAD), a disease of the arteries that supply blood and oxygen to the heart, causes decreased blood flow to the

heart muscle. If the arteries become blocked or severely narrowed, the heart becomes starved for oxygen and nutrients.

- Heart attack. A heart attack occurs when a coronary artery becomes suddenly blocked, stopping the flow of blood to the heart muscle. A heart attack damages the heart muscle, resulting in a scarred area that does not function properly.
- Cardiomyopathy. Damage to the heart muscle from causes other than artery or blood flow problems, such as from infections or alcohol or drug abuse.
- Conditions that overwork the heart. Conditions including high blood pressure, valve disease, thyroid disease, kidney disease,

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diabetes, or heart defects present at birth can all cause heart failure. In addition, heart failure can occur when several diseases or conditions are present at once.

### **What Are the Types of Heart Failure?**

**Systolic dysfunction** (or systolic heart failure) occurs when the heart muscle doesn't contract with enough force, so there is less oxygen-rich blood that is pumped throughout the body.

**Diastolic dysfunction** (or diastolic heart failure) occurs when the heart contracts normally, but the ventricles do not relax properly or are stiff, and less blood enters the heart during normal filling.

A calculation done during an echocardiogram, called the ejection fraction (EF), is used to measure how well your heart pumps with each beat to help determine if systolic or diastolic dysfunction is present. Your doctor can discuss which condition you have.

### **Is There a Treatment for Heart Failure?**

There are more treatment options available for heart failure than ever before. Tight control over your medications and lifestyle, coupled with careful monitoring, are the first steps. As the condition progresses, doctors specializing in the treatment of heart failure can offer more advanced treatment options.

The goals of treating heart

failure are primarily to decrease the likelihood of disease progression (thereby decreasing the risk of death and the need for hospitalization), to lessen symptoms, and to improve quality of life.

Together, you and your doctor can determine the best course of treatment for you.

– From WebMD

## **BENEFITS CORNER**

### **Reminder**

As an added preventive benefit to our CHP Members, CHP covers CDL physicals, Health Fairs and Flu Shots. Just a reminder that reimbursement for these types of procedures are still subject to the CHP Timely Filing Limit of 180 days. Therefore, please remember to submit your claim form and receipt as soon as possible after your date of service. The claims forms are located at [www.ctsi.org](http://www.ctsi.org)

### **Appeals Process**

Just a reminder that as a CHP Member you do have a right to appeal a denial of coverage. There are 2 levels of appeals. The first level of appeal will be received at the Anthem level and will be reviewed by a group of physicians and certified medical directors at Anthem. If your appeal is denied at the 1st level of appeal, you do have a right to a 2nd level of appeal to the CHP Board of Directors. For more detailed information about the appeal process and timeframe for filing an appeal, please check your CHP Plan Document in the section titled "Complaints, Grievances and Appeals". A copy of the CHP Plan Document is located at [www.ctsi.org](http://www.ctsi.org)

