

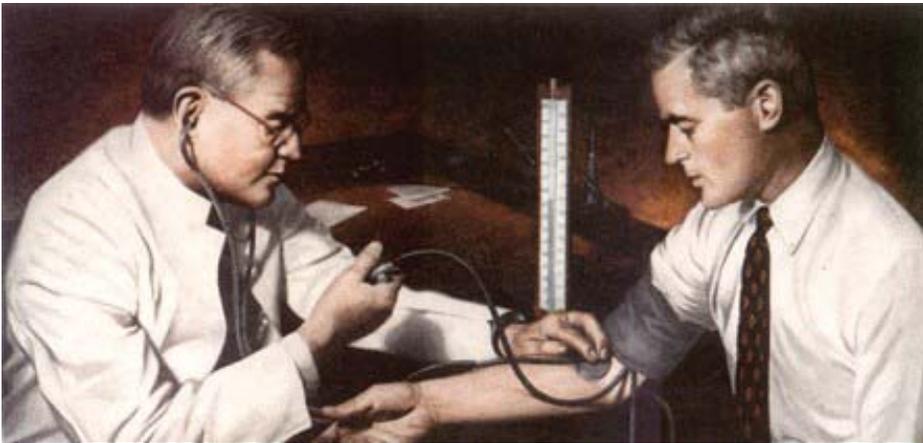
Health Awareness

A County Health Pool Publication



February 2007

American Heart Month



No muscle in the body works harder, longer, steadier, decade after decade, than the heart. Only the brain requires more nourishment and oxygen than the heart. Little larger than a fist, weighing less than a pound, the human heart beats 100,000 times a day, pumping the blood of life through the body's 60,000-mile cardiovascular system—some 2,000 gallons daily, tens of millions of gallons in a lifetime.

Heart Failure Basics

This hard working organ can at times experience failure. Heart failure is a condition that reduces the heart's ability to pump blood. It can result from a heart attack, untreated high blood pressure, coronary artery disease or another problem.

Heart failure affects more than 5 million people in the United States. Because of heart failure, the heart cannot pump enough blood to supply the body's need for oxygen. As a result, fluid may build up in the lungs, legs and in other tissues throughout the body.

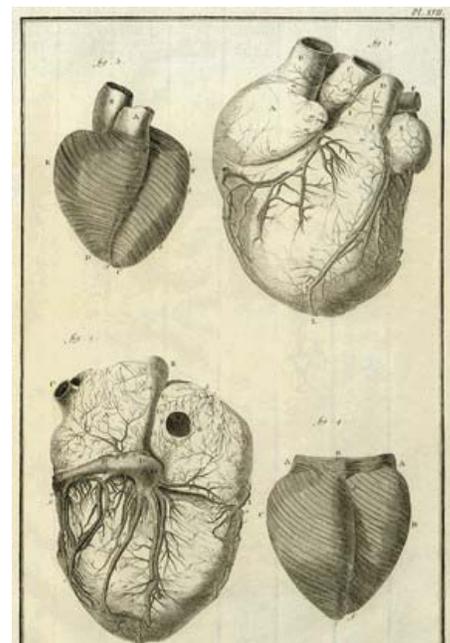
That's why when you have heart failure you may experience swelling and weight gain. It's also why you may have shortness of breath or trouble breathing at night. The term "congestive heart failure" is sometimes used to describe the condition.

Heart failure is not always apparent. Some people in the very early stages of heart failure may have no

symptoms at all. And others dismiss getting tired and being short of breath as simply signs of growing older.

One of the ways heart failure can be identified is to measure the percentage of blood that is pumped out of the heart during each beat. This percentage is called Ejection Fraction. In a healthy heart, 50% to 75% of the blood is pumped out during each beat. Many people with heart failure pump out less than 40%.

Sources: WebMD at www.WebMD.com and HeartHelp Resource Center at www.Hearhelp.com



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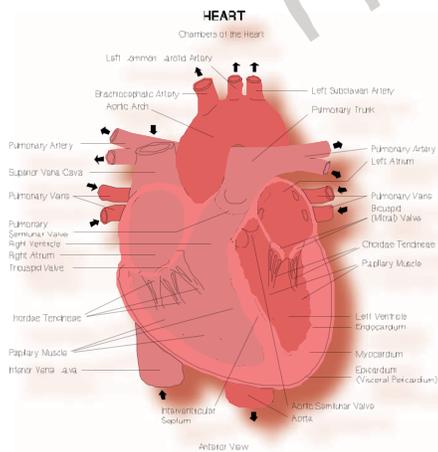
American Heart Month
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Heart Failure Risk Factors

Some people are more likely to develop heart failure than others. No one can predict for certain who will develop it, but there are known risk factors. Being aware of the risk factors and seeing a doctor for early treatment are good strategies for managing congestive heart failure.

Heart failure risk factors include:

- High blood pressure (hypertension)
- Heart attack (myocardial infarction)
- Abnormal heart valves
- Enlargement of the heart
- Family history of heart disease
- Diabetes



Preventing Heart Failure

There's no sure way to prevent heart failure. However, some of the underlying causes of heart failure such as coronary artery disease, high blood pressure and diabetes can be prevented or controlled by lifestyle changes in some cases.

Sources: WebMD at www.WebMD.com and HeartHelp Resource Center at www.Hearthelp.com

Causes of Heart Failure

Common causes of heart failure include:

- ❑ **Coronary artery disease**- narrowing of the arteries; decreases blood flow to the heart
- ❑ **Previous heart attack** - scar tissue caused by a heart attack can interfere with the normal function of the heart
- ❑ **High blood pressure** – the heart must work harder to pump blood, which can weaken the heart over time
- ❑ **Valve disease** – damaged valves mean the heart must work harder
- ❑ **Congenital heart disease** – left undetected, it can cause damage over time
- ❑ **Cardiomyopathy** – a degenerative disease of the heart's muscle tissue
- ❑ **Endocarditis** – a rare but serious infection of the lining of the heart or heart valves, which can cause the heart to work less efficiently
- ❑ **Myocarditis** – infection of the heart's muscle tissue, which inflames the heart and makes it unable to pump as efficiently
- ❑ **Diabetes** – has been shown to impact the heart's pumping ability. Can also contribute to heart failure in people with coronary artery disease

CHP Educational Training 2007

CHP Educational Training 2007

Please check with your county or entity contact for the dates and times that your CHP Benefits Administrator will be visiting your entity for the 2007 educational training sessions.

The image shows a woman with blonde hair, wearing a red blazer, standing and presenting a large chart or poster to a group of people whose backs are to the camera. The setting appears to be a professional training or meeting.