



Neighborhood Health Partners

Managing Congestive Heart Failure (CHF)

What Is CHF?

CHF is an ongoing condition that usually gets worse over time. Treatment can slow its progress, make you feel better and help you live longer.

At first, you may not have any signs of heart failure. But over time, the heart muscle cannot pump enough blood through the heart to meet your need for blood and oxygen. The heart becomes unable to maintain the workload needed.

Warning Signs

- Feeling tired
- Having shortness of breath
- Pounding or racing heart
- Being weak or dizzy
- Coughing or wheezing frequently
- Swelling from build up of excess fluid
- Going to the bathroom often
- Gaining weight

Diagnosis

CHF is diagnosed in several ways. An echocardiogram usually is the simplest way to determine if you have CHF. Doctors also use chest X-rays, electrocardiograms, blood tests, your health history and other tests in confirming CHF, what is causing it, and if it is getting worse.

Complications

Complications linked to CHF include the following:

- Heart rhythm problems
- Heart valve problems
- Kidney damage or failure
- Liver failure

Take Control with These 7 Tips

1. Weigh yourself daily, using the same scale at the same time every morning
2. Weigh yourself before eating or drinking, and before using the toilet
3. Weigh yourself before getting dressed
4. Record your weight in a weight log
5. Compare your results to other days and to your normal weight
6. If you gain over 2 pounds in 24 hours, or 4 pounds in a week, call your doctor and health coach at once
7. Ask your doctor if he or she says you should take an extra dose of your diuretic or water pill medicine to flush out built-up fluid

If you gain 2-4 pounds in a week, your CHF may be getting worse. Call your doctor or 911 right away!

Reference Guideline: 2013 ACCF/AHA Guideline for the Management of Heart Failure: Executive Summary: A Report of the American College of Cardiology Foundation/American Heart Association Task Force on Practice Guidelines. 2013 June.