

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. Heart failure can cause fluid to build up in the body, which is seen as swelling (edema), most commonly in the lower legs and ankles. Fluid can also collect in the lungs and interfere with breathing, causing shortness of breath.

Appropriate recommended care for heart failure includes assessing heart function, advising smokers to quit, prescribing specific medications, and giving written instructions to include a heart healthy diet and education on the signs and symptoms of heart failure.



