

Heart Failure

Heart failure is a chronic disease in which the heart is not able to pump enough blood to the rest of the body. There are different causes for the heart reaching this point: a cardiac arrest or a chest angina, an affliction of the heart's valves, cardiac arrhythmia, lack of check-ups for diseases like diabetes or high blood pressure, alcohol abuse and sometimes the cause is unknown.



What are the signs?

- Shortness of breath or fatigue.
- Difficulty in breathing when lying down or the need to sit up suddenly because you are afraid of suffocating.
- A persistent dry cough.
- Swollen legs.
- Increased need to urinate at night.
- Weight gain (over 2 kg per week).
- Chest palpitations.



Treatment and lifestyle

Treatment is aimed at improving the patient's quality of life and survival. It is very important to take all the medication exactly as your doctor instructs you. Have regular check-ups if you have high blood pressure or diabetes.



Important non-pharmacological measures:

- Follow a **low-salt diet**.
- **Avoid drinking too much liquid**.
- **Avoid smoking and alcohol**.
- **Weigh yourself** regularly.
- Do **moderate exercise every day**, making sure not to overdo it. Avoid bending down and stretching unnecessarily. Be realistic about what you can do each day. Ask for help.



See your doctor or nurse if any of these symptoms appear:

- A need to sleep sitting up.
- A growing feeling of not having enough air.
- Swollen feet, ankles or abdomen.
- A sudden weight gain (over 1 kg per day or over 2 kg in 2-3 days).
- A persistent dry cough.
- Chest pain.
- Increased tiredness.
- Dizziness or fainting.
- A smaller amount of urine per day.