

Eight key symptoms of heart failure^{1,2}

Even though heart failure is a **chronic condition**, it can be **effectively managed**. This means that being able to recognize and check the symptoms of chronic heart failure is especially important. Learn more about the signs and symptoms of chronic heart failure below.

Should you experience any of these symptoms please follow the advice of your healthcare professional.

Shortness of breath

Heart failure can cause the fluid in your body to gather in your lungs which may cause you to feel short of breath during everyday activities.^{1,2}



Shortness of breath when lying down

Lying flat may also make you feel short of breath so that you need to sleep sat up or with multiple pillows.^{1,2}



Rapid heartbeat

The heart sometimes starts to speed up to compensate for its reduced ability to pump blood around the body.^{1,2}



Loss of appetite

A build-up of fluid around the gut can affect digestion and might cause a loss of appetite, or make you feel sick when eating.^{1,2}



Tiredness

Heart failure means less oxygen-rich blood is circulating the body. Because your muscles and tissues need oxygen for energy, this means people with heart failure can feel tired.^{1,2}



Swelling in the ankles, legs and abdomen

Clothes or shoes might feel tighter as fluid in the body builds up in the legs, ankles or abdomen causing them to swell up.^{1,2}



Sudden weight increase

Worsening heart failure may cause an increase in weight. This is due to an increase in fluid in your body. If your weight increases by more than 2kg in 2 days consult your health care professional as soon as possible.^{1,2}



Frequency of urination

A reduced amount of blood reaches your kidneys when you have heart failure, causing you to urinate less frequently. Conversely, if you take diuretics (eg. water pills), you might urinate more frequently, when the excess fluid in your body is eliminated.^{1,2}



To learn more about the symptoms of heart failure, and how you can check and manage them, explore: www.heartfoundation.org.au/your-heart/heart-conditions/chronic-heart-failure-the-facts

References:

1. Ponikowski P, Voors A, Anker SD et al. ESC Guidelines for the diagnosis and treatment of acute and chronic heart failure. *Eur Heart J* 2016; 37, (27):2129-2200. 2. Living well with Chronic heart failure. Heart Foundation. https://www.heartfoundation.org.au/images/uploads/publications/CON-035.v5_LWWCHF-2015-web_v2.pdf.