



American  
Heart  
Association.

*Take charge of  
Heart Failure*



PATIENT/HEALTH CARE  
PROVIDER

# Discussion Guide

Be prepared to get the most out of your appointment.



Learn as much as you can  
about your condition.



Write down questions to ask  
your health care professional.

When you have **heart failure**, your heart is unable to pump enough blood and **oxygen** your body needs to be at its best. This may cause fatigue, shortness of breath and coughing.

The **symptoms** of heart failure tend to get worse over time as the heart becomes weaker and less able to function efficiently.

**More than 6 million adults** in the U.S. are living with heart failure. Getting treatment as soon as possible is the best way to manage the condition.



**Now is the time to focus on increasing the healthy years you have ahead.**

There's no cure for heart failure. But if caught early, strategies can stop or slow the symptoms for many years.

Your health care professional can prescribe medications and recommend lifestyle changes to help you maintain your quality of life.

## At your appointment:

- You'll be asked about symptoms. How long have you had them? Have they gotten worse? Do they interfere with your usual activities?
- The exam will include a blood test and blood pressure check.
- Your health care professional will look for signs of excess fluid (a condition called congestive heart failure).
- You may need imaging tests such as a chest X-ray, echocardiogram or electrocardiogram.
- Your health care professional may prescribe medication or oxygen.
- You'll get advice about restricting fluids and avoiding salty foods.

## Bring a list of questions to prepare for your appointment.

*Being actively involved in your care will help you get the best possible results from treatment. Check off the questions you want to remember to ask your health care professional.*

### Treatment for Heart Failure

- What's my stage of heart failure?
- What causes heart failure?
- What did you learn from my tests and imaging studies?
- What's ejection fraction and why is it important?
- Are there medications that can help? Do they have side effects?
- How often do I need to see a health care professional to monitor my condition?
- How long before my symptoms get worse? Will I need to be hospitalized?
- Am I a candidate for a heart transplant?
- How long can you live with heart failure?
- Can I participate in clinical trials?

### Living with Heart Failure

- What can I read to learn more about heart failure?
- What lifestyle changes will make the biggest difference to my health?
- What symptoms mean I should call a health care professional right away or go to the ER?
- Do I need to restrict my activities or increase them?
- What foods should I avoid?
- How much fluid can I take in daily and how do I measure it?
- How could my heart failure impact my family?
- Are there support groups?
- What plans should I make to prepare for the future?

