Advanced care for advanced heart failure

Understanding your heart failure diagnosis
What does a heart failure diagnosis mean for you?

Your heart failure diagnosis means you’re one of hundreds of thousands of people affected by this condition each year. Most times, heart failure can be treated, managed, and sometimes even cured.

Be on the look-out for common symptoms of heart failure, such as shortness of breath, swelling in your feet and legs, and fatigue. The two types of heart failure are:

- Systolic heart failure is more common and occurs when the heart enlarges, losing its ability to pump.
- Diastolic heart failure happens when the heart muscle becomes thick and stiff, limiting blood flow.

Be on the look-out for common symptoms of heart failure, such as shortness of breath, swelling in your feet and legs, and fatigue. Other symptoms may include:

- Weight gain from fluid buildup
- Swollen abdomen, nausea, and loss of appetite
- Confusion or inability to think clearly
- Cough, usually dry or wheezing
- Inability to sleep unless propped up
- Frequent urination, especially at night
- Decreased exercise tolerance

Call your doctor if these symptoms become difficult to manage.

What symptoms might I experience?

What type of heart failure do I have?

Michael C. Gavin, MD, MPH, and Pablo Quintero Pinzon, MD, (l-r) Multidisciplinary heart failure experts collaborate to deliver comprehensive care.
There are a few changes most doctors will recommend for managing heart failure:

- Quit smoking to minimize strain on your heart
- Maintain a healthy weight or lose weight to reduce your symptoms
- Track your sodium and fluid intake and/or use medications to prevent your body’s fluid buildup
- Adopt a heart-healthy diet that limits saturated fats, trans fats, and sodium, among others
- Find time for physical activity every day to establish healthy routines
- Monitor your blood pressure both at home and in a doctor’s office

The Advanced Heart Failure Program at BIDMC brings together cardiologists and cardiac surgeons who care for all stages of heart failure with a range of advanced treatment options. This team works closely with other experts at BIDMC, including interventional cardiologists, electrophysiologists and echocardiographers.

Medical management can help reduce heart failure symptoms and improve your overall quality of life.

Supportive services such as nutritional consults are also available should you need them.

Cardiac Direct Access Unit (CDAc) Our Cardiac Direct Access Unit (CDAc) enables you to bypass the emergency room for immediate care for non-life-threatening symptoms, such as chest pain or shortness of breath (physician referral required).

Implantable devices such as implantable cardioverter-defibrillators (ICDs) and ventricular assist devices (VADs), regulate and support your heart’s rhythm and blood-pumping strength. Other devices can help deliver oxygen to your blood or even allow your doctor to remotely monitor your heart health while you’re at home.

Advanced surgical options are offered for more complex heart failure to treat blocked arteries or repair damaged heart valves.

Transplant evaluation and management We partner with the Cardiac Transplant Center at Tufts Medical Center, the most active heart transplant program in New England, to provide the highest quality of care to all our transplant patients both during and after their procedures.

Palliative care referrals are available when needed.
Meet our team

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