

What Is Congestive Heart Failure (CHF)?

Heart failure occurs when the heart cannot pump enough oxygen-rich blood through your body, causing important organs to receive less blood. Because the heart is not pumping well, fluid backs up into your lungs and other parts of your body. This can cause you to feel short of breath and tired and have swelling in your feet, ankles, hands and stomach.

How to live better with heart failure

- Weigh yourself daily (first thing in the morning before dressing)
 - Keep weight monitoring log.
 - Call your doctor if you gain 3 lbs. in one day or 5 lbs. in one week.
- Eat low-salt foods
 - Read food labels and select food with 140 mg or less of sodium (salt) per serving.
 - When choosing packaged foods, look for the words “low-sodium” or “sodium-free” on label.
 - Limit fluid intake to less than 1.5-2 ounces/day.
- Monitor how you feel. Notify your doctor if you have:
 - Increased cough
 - Shortness of breath, especially when lying flat
 - Increased swelling
- Take your medications
 - Take as prescribed by your doctor
 - Bring medications to your doctor’s visit
- Exercise: Focus on activities that can make your heart pump stronger
 - Walking
 - Biking

Novant Health programs and support services

- Novant Health Heart & Vascular Institute Heart Strong Clinic offers CHF patients medical support, including
 - Dedicated providers seeing patients five days per week
 - A dedicated CHF pharmacist and a CHF nurse
 - Virtual CHF classes available online anytime
- Nationally certified cardiac rehabilitation program is available to improve heart health. Enroll by calling **910-662-9500**.
- Transitional disease management support: After discharging from Novant Health New Hanover Regional Medical Center, patients with CHF who are at high risk for readmission may receive follow-up phone calls from a nurse and potentially a home visit from a community paramedic to help make a smooth transition back to living in your home. Call **910-667-7275** to reach the transitional disease management team.
- Novant Health Home Care can provide follow-up care in the comfort of your home. The telehealth program provides equipment in your home to allow you to monitor and record your blood pressure, oxygen levels, weight and more. That information is transmitted back and monitored by cardiac care coordinators to help assist your physician with medical changes. Contact your provider for a referral to Novant Health Home Care.
- Walk-in and Urgent Care is available for any urgent medical needs. Visit **NovantHealth.org** to find the walk-in care location nearest you..
- VitaLine provides free, confidential access to non-urgent health information from experienced registered nurses and other professionally trained staff who can help connect you to the care you need. Call **888-815-5188** to reach the VitaLine team, who will follow up with you at their earliest convenience.

Additional references and resources

- American Association of Heart Failure Nurses’ patient education site: aahfnpatienteducation.com.
To access the AAHFN Patient Education Heartline, dial **856-539-9006**

NewHanoverHealthAdvantage.com

Have a question about your health? Call our Nurse Line at **910-667-7275**.

