

Achieve

A Newsletter
for AvMed
Members

▶ YOUR HEALTHIEST LIFE WITH HEART FAILURE

How to recognize a CHF emergency

Knowing the warning signs of congestive heart failure (CHF) can help you act quickly and may help reduce the risk of serious complications. Here's what to know:

What is a CHF emergency?

A CHF emergency happens when the heart can't keep up with the body's needs, despite current treatment.

Subtle warning signs

Call your doctor if you notice:

- Rapid weight gain
- Swelling in your feet, legs, fingers, or belly
- Extreme tiredness or weakness

- Loss of appetite or nausea
- Confusion or trouble thinking clearly

Sudden warning signs

Call 911 right away if you have:

- Trouble breathing at rest, while lying down, or if you wake up suddenly short of breath
- A rapid or irregular heartbeat
- Fainting or feeling like you might pass out

- Chest pain or pressure
- Coughing up pink or bloody mucus

These signs may mean your heart is under serious stress.

How to help avoid an emergency

Track your weight, blood pressure, heart rate, and fluid intake daily.

Bring your notes with you to regular appointments, and if possible, to urgent ones, too.





Treatment options for advanced heart failure

Sometimes people with CHF need extra help managing their condition. These treatments and devices may help improve heart function — and quality of life.

What does “advanced” heart failure mean?

Heart failure is considered advanced when symptoms continue to worsen even with standard medical treatment. This is when your doctor may recommend newer options.

Implanted devices

These devices, which are placed inside the body, can help manage

abnormal heart rhythms. They also improve how the heart’s four chambers work together.

One example: an implantable cardioverter-defibrillator (ICD). An ICD can detect a dangerous heart rhythm and deliver a small shock to restore a normal heartbeat.

Mechanical pumps

Another device that may

help is a left ventricular assist device (LVAD). An LVAD helps move blood from the heart to the rest of the body. That pumping assistance may reduce symptoms and make daily activities easier.

Surgery and/or transplantation

If other treatment options aren’t working, surgery may be an option. Some procedures treat blocked arteries or repair damaged heart valves. In very serious cases, your physician may recommend considering a heart transplant.

A transplant can improve symptoms and quality of life. However, it requires lifelong medical care and additional medication.

Shared decision making

Treatment decisions are personal. Talk with your Provider about your symptoms, your daily life, and your goals. Together, you can create a care plan that fits your needs.



To reach a Case Manager

Simply call 1-833-609-0735, email DM@AvMed.org or scan the QR code provided.



Healthy eating made simple



What “low sodium” and “reduced sugar” really mean

Nutrition labels can be confusing and healthy-seeming descriptions may not be healthy at all. Here’s how to decode a few of the most common claims.

Bright, colorful phrases on the front of food packages are designed to catch your eye. But what exactly are they claiming? Here’s how to find out.

What does “low” mean?

“Low” means the nutrient is below a specific limit

set by the FDA for each serving.

For example, “low sodium” means 140 milligrams of sodium or less per serving. “Low fat” means 3 grams of fat or less per serving.

What about “reduced” or “less”?

“Reduced” or “less”

means the product has at least 25% less of a nutrient than the regular version.

“Reduced sugar” does not mean sugar-free. It only means the product has less sugar than the original version.

Is “no added sugar” the same as “sugar free”?

“No added sugar” means no sugar was added during processing. The food may still contain natural sugars, such as those found in fruit or milk.

“Sugar free” means the product has less than 0.5 grams of sugar per serving.

What does “light” mean on food labels?

“Light” (or “lite”) can mean a few things. It may mean fewer calories or less fat than the regular version. In some cases, it describes color or texture instead of nutrition.

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Recipe



Sunrise berry smoothie

This simple smoothie is full of vitamin C and antioxidants. Making it for one? Cut the ingredients in half, or save the extra for later.

Ingredients

- 2 cups mixed frozen berries
- 1 cup plain 2% fat Greek yogurt
- 1 cup orange juice

Directions

1. Combine all ingredients in a blender.
2. Blend until smooth.
3. Pour into two serving cups.

Nutrition facts (per serving)

Calories 180 | Fat | Saturated fat 1
Carbs 31 | Protein 10 | Fiber 4 | Sugar 22 | Sodium 31
Potassium 546 | Vitamin C 180% DV | Calcium 16% DV