

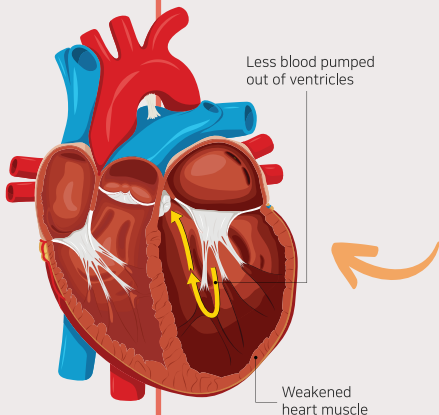
Empowering Hearts

Coping strategies for heart failure in women



In our society, many of us might have heard of what heart failure actually is. mix of false notions and unclear doubts. In this article, we'll be exploring the types of heart failure, contributing causes, and practical steps to take in dealing with this cardiovascular condition.

What is heart failure in women?



Heart failure is a condition where the heart fails to pump blood as efficiently as it should, causing fluid to build up in the body. There are several types of heart failure, including:

♥ Systolic heart failure

This heart failure occurs when the heart muscle loses its ability to contract and pump oxygen-rich blood out to the body.

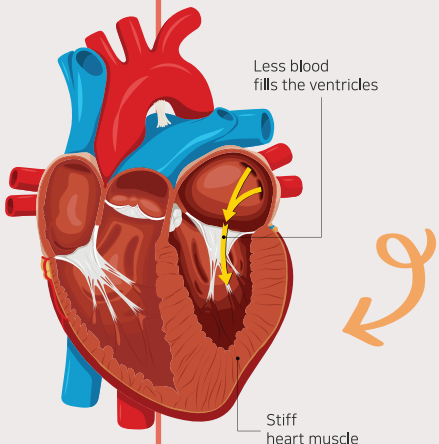
In a systolic heart failure, your heart cannot effectively contract with each heartbeat. In a diastolic heart failure, your heart cannot relax between heartbeats.

So the next time you're getting a blood pressure reading, know that the top number refers to the systolic blood pressure, while the bottom number refers to the diastolic blood pressure. The ideal reading for a healthy adult is considered to be 120/80, or reported as "120 over 80."

♥ Diastolic heart failure

This is a condition when the heart muscles become stiff and is unable to fill properly.

When the stiff heart chamber is unable to relax as it should, it causes build-up of pressure and subsequently transmit the pressure to the pulmonary circulation. This causes breathing difficulties or coughing, particularly after physical exertion.



What does heart failure look like?

Men and women experience similar signs and symptoms of heart failure. Having said that, research shows that women are more likely than men to experience:



Shortness of breath with physical activity



Trouble exercising



Swelling (edema)

What should you do next?

In general, the most important step you can take is to identify your risk factors and work on them with your healthcare provider by:

- ♥ Keeping up with annual physical exams.
- ♥ Managing your blood pressure, cholesterol and blood sugar.
- ♥ Creating a functional exercise plan.
- ♥ Avoiding tobacco products and limiting alcohol.
- ♥ Maintaining a heart-healthy eating plan.



Heart failure is a chronic illness that, if left untreated, can lead to life-threatening complications. Pass this article on to everybody you meet, and you could save a life. ♥

Sources: Mayo Clinic, Cleveland Clinic, Healthline

What factors contribute to heart failure in women?

Traditional risk factors for heart disease, such as high cholesterol and high blood pressure, affects everyone no matter their gender. Statistically, however, women are at greater risk of developing heart disease than men.

Researchers have managed to discover many sex-specific differences in the cardiovascular system. Here is a brief look at some of them:

♥ **ANATOMY** - Women have smaller blood vessels and thinner walls around the heart chambers.

♥ **BLOOD COUNT** - Women have fewer red blood cells, hence lesser oxygen is given and carried compared to men.

♥ **SLEEP APNEA** - This condition is when one experiences pauses in breathing during sleep, which is prevalent in people with heart failure.

♥ **POSTPARTUM CARDIOMYOPATHY** - Some women may suffer from heart failure in the month before giving birth or shortly after giving birth. Unfortunately, there is a possibility for a recurrence in future pregnancies.

♥ **POLYCYSTIC OVARY SYNDROME (PCOS)** - Those with PCOS have a high chance of acquiring cardiovascular diseases as they are more than likely to have diabetes, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, or sleep apnea too.

♥ **ORAL CONTRACEPTIVE THERAPY** - Consumers of 'the pill' who also have other risk factors like obesity may be at risk.