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HEART FAILURE

AWARENESS WEEK • MAY 1-7, 2023

IT'S NOT NORMAL TO BE BREATHLESS

in partnership with



IT'S NOT NORMAL TO BE BREATHLESS: Know the signs & symptoms of heart failure
Common symptoms include: shortness of breath, lack of energy (fatigue), and swelling in the legs or abdomen.



750,000 Canadians
live with **heart failure.**

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1 in 3 Canadians has
been **touched** by
heart failure.

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What is heart failure?

Heart failure is a chronic condition caused by the heart not functioning as it should, or by a problem with its structure. It can happen if the heart is too weak or too stiff, or both. This can lead to fatigue, swelling in the legs and abdomen, and shortness of breath which can be from fluid in the lungs. There are many reasons why someone may develop heart failure. The most common causes of heart failure include coronary artery disease and high blood pressure.¹

Self-care and self-management

Follow these tips to reduce your risk of developing heart failure or to manage your existing heart failure.

- Understand your risk or chronic condition, know your symptoms and ask your healthcare provider (HCP)
- Follow up regularly with your HCP
- Advocate for your own care
- Involve caregivers and peer support
- Monitor your blood pressure and heart rate
- If you have heart failure, monitor your weight
- Take your medications as prescribed
- Ask for support to quit smoking
- Seek support for your mental health issues
- Attend recommended rehabilitation programs
- Increase your daily activity
- Have your vaccinations up to date

Become an advocate for your care: Act now and live longer

- Learn about the symptoms of heart failure, write down your questions and ask your healthcare team what you can do to help prevent heart failure or your heart failure symptoms from getting worse.
- Be patient with yourself, share your feelings and talk about your concerns with your healthcare team.
- Join support groups and share your experience. Talking with your peers can help relieve some of the stress, pressure, and anxiety.



Tips to prepare for a healthcare visit

- Consider having someone participate in the visit with you if possible (e.g., family member, caregiver, trusted friend).
- Have your health card, current medication list, pharmacy name, recent blood pressure readings and if applicable, glucose levels ready.
- Write down your list of concerns and questions, and bring a pen and paper to make notes.
- Ask about reliable online resources and applications to help you manage your risk or condition.

For more information and a guide to virtual healthcare sessions visit: www.heartandstroke.ca/virtualchecklist

PATIENT EDUCATION AND SUPPORT RESOURCES



[Canadian Heart Failure Society](#)

[Heart & Stroke](#)

[HeartLife](#)

[Canadian HF Alliance](#)

[Quebec Heart Failure Society](#)

[The Heart Hub – Learn, Connect, & Empower](#)

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1. Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada. Falling Short. How Canada Is Failing People with Heart Failure — and How We Can Change That. 2022 Spotlight on Heart Failure. 2022. <https://www.heartandstroke.ca/heart-disease/conditions/heart-failure>