

*presents*



# HEART FAILURE

AWARENESS WEEK MAY 3-9, 2021

LIVING WELL WITH HEART FAILURE

*in partnership with*



Canadian  
Cardiovascular  
Society



HeartLife  
FOUNDATION

Canadian  
Council of  
Cardiovascular  
Nurses



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Prevention and Rehabilitation

## Self-care in a virtual world: What you need to know about self-managing heart failure!

- Heart failure is on the rise. In Canada there are over 600,000 people living with heart failure which affects people of all ages.<sup>1</sup>
- Over 90,000 people are diagnosed with heart failure each year in Canada.<sup>2</sup>
- Surprisingly, many people in Canada do not understand heart failure. More than 1 in 4 Canadians do not know what heart failure is, and almost half incorrectly think it can be cured.<sup>3</sup>
- It is more important than ever to be responsible for your own care. There is a lot you can do to live well with heart failure.



Over **600,000** people  
in **Canada** are living  
with **heart failure**.

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## What is heart failure?

Heart failure is a complex syndrome which occurs when the heart is unable to pump enough blood to meet the needs of the body. Common symptoms include shortness of breath, leg swelling and fatigue. 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.

## What you can do to promote self-care and self-management

- Monitor your symptoms and report any change to your healthcare provider
- Reduce salt in your diet
- Increase your daily activity
- Seek peer support
- Keep your blood pressure low
- Follow up with your physician
- Stop smoking
- Take your medications as prescribed

## Covid-19 and managing heart failure

Now more than ever, it's important to take care of your heart. Remember the following:

- Cardiovascular care is safe
- Attend your medical appointments
- Find online programs to stay active
- Act when you experience new or worsening symptoms
- Wash your hands and wear a mask
- Don't miss your pills, stay on top of refills
- Seek peer support for your mental health
- Always take your medications as prescribed

Work with your healthcare team to learn if you are at risk of heart failure. Ask what you can do to help prevent this condition from worsening.

## Self-management is team effort

Even though heart failure cannot be cured, there are treatments that can help people feel better and live longer. They often need help from a number of healthcare providers, family members, and they also need to be active partners in their care. Together you can build a plan that supports your needs and goals.

## Become an active partner in your virtual care

- ✓ People living with heart failure need to pay extra attention to their salt and fluid intake, eat a healthy diet, stay active, take their medication as prescribed, and be smoke free.
- ✓ Learn about your symptoms of heart failure – they may not be the same as someone else with heart failure. Ask your healthcare team what you can do to help prevent your heart failure symptoms from getting worse.
- ✓ Be patient with yourself – learning to live with heart failure takes time. 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.



## General tips to prepare for a virtual healthcare session

- Plan your meeting space. Consider technology, privacy and confidentiality, good lighting, minimal background noise and distractions
- Ensure that the space is clear for you to safely move around for assessments and rehabilitation
- Have someone else available to participate in the session with you if possible (e.g., family member, caregiver, trusted friend)
- Have your health data ready: health card, current medication list, pharmacy name, recent blood pressure readings or pulse, and weight measurement
- Write down your list of concerns and questions, and have a pen and paper to make notes
- Ask about reliable online resources and applications to help you manage your recovery and your daily activities

For more information and a guide to virtual healthcare sessions visit: [heartandstroke.ca](https://heartandstroke.ca)

Together we can provide support for those affected by heart failure. The Canadian Heart Failure Society, Canadian Cardiovascular Society, HeartLife Foundation, Canadian Council of Cardiovascular Nurses, Canadian Association of Cardiovascular Prevention and Rehabilitation, Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada, and Quebec Heart Failure Society are coming together to raise awareness and provide support for those affected by heart failure.

## Where to Find Heart Failure Resources?

### Patient Education and Support Resources

[heartfailure.ca](https://heartfailure.ca)

[heartlife.ca](https://heartlife.ca)

[heartandstroke.ca/heartfailure](https://heartandstroke.ca/heartfailure)

[cacpr.ca](https://cacpr.ca)

### Professional Education Resources

[heartfailure.ca](https://heartfailure.ca)

[sqic.org](https://sqic.org)

[ccs.ca](https://ccs.ca)

For information about online or support group meetings in your area, visit [heartlife.ca](https://heartlife.ca) or [heartandstroke.ca/connect](https://heartandstroke.ca/connect).

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1. Blais, C. et al. Assessing the burden of hospitalized and community-care heart failure in Canada. *Can J Cardiol.* 2014 Mar; 30(3):352-8 for 3.5% prevalence rate in population 40+ (p. 356) in five major provinces of Canada and applying that rate to Canadian population 40+ (18,664,035 in 2017) from Statistics Canada, CANSIM Table 17-10-0005-01.
2. Huitema, A. et al. Optimal Usage of Sacubitril/Valsartan for the Treatment of Heart Failure: The Importance of Optimizing Heart Failure Care in Canada. *Can J Cardiol.* 2020 Sept; 2(5):321-7.
3. 2016 Heart & Stroke public polling conducted by Environics Research Group.