

Heart Failure / CCF

Heart failure, also known as congestive heart failure, is a chronic condition in which the heart is unable to pump blood efficiently to meet the body's needs. It occurs when the heart muscle becomes weakened or damaged, leading to a decrease in its ability to contract effectively.

There are two main types of heart failure:

1. **Systolic Heart Failure:** This occurs when the heart muscle becomes weak and is unable to contract with enough force to push an adequate amount of blood out into the body.
2. **Diastolic Heart Failure:** In this type, the heart muscle becomes stiff and is unable to relax properly, which reduces its ability to fill with blood between heartbeats.

Heart failure can be caused by various factors, including:

1. **Coronary artery disease:** Narrowing or blockage of the coronary arteries, which supply blood to the heart muscle, can lead to a heart attack or ischaemic heart disease, both of which can damage the heart muscle.
2. **High blood pressure:** Long-term uncontrolled hypertension can strain the heart and lead to heart failure.
3. **Cardiomyopathy:** Diseases of the heart muscle, such as dilated cardiomyopathy or hypertrophic cardiomyopathy, can weaken or stiffen the heart muscle.
4. **Heart valve problems:** Conditions such as aortic stenosis or mitral regurgitation can put extra stress on the heart and lead to heart failure.
5. **Congenital heart defects:** Defects present at birth can cause heart failure if they affect the heart's structure or function.
6. **Other factors:** Diabetes, obesity, thyroid disorders, kidney disease, lung diseases, and certain medications can contribute to the development of heart failure.

The symptoms of heart failure can vary depending on the severity and type of heart failure but often include:

1. Shortness of breath, especially during physical activity or when lying flat.
2. Fatigue and weakness.
3. Swelling in the legs, ankles, feet, or abdomen (oedema).
4. Rapid or irregular heartbeat.
5. Persistent cough or wheezing.
6. Reduced ability to exercise.

7. Sudden weight gain due to fluid retention.

The diagnosis of heart failure typically involves a combination of medical history evaluation, physical examination, imaging tests (such as echocardiography), and blood tests. Treatment aims to relieve symptoms, slow the progression of the condition, and improve quality of life. It may include:

1. Lifestyle modifications: This can involve dietary changes, sodium restriction, weight management, regular exercise, smoking cessation, and alcohol moderation.
2. Medications: Various medications may be prescribed to manage symptoms, improve heart function, and prevent complications.
3. Medical devices: In some cases, devices such as implantable cardioverter-defibrillators (ICDs) or cardiac resynchronisation therapy (CRT) devices may be recommended.
4. Surgical interventions: may be necessary
5. It's essential for individuals with heart failure to work closely with your doctor at SunStar Clinics to have a personalised treatment plan and engage in regular monitoring to manage the condition effectively.