

February is American Heart Month

5.7 million Americans are currently living with heart failure, and 670,000 new cases are diagnosed each year — up significantly from 500,000 cases annually just a few years ago. As our population ages, this epidemic of heart failure will only continue to grow. The cost of providing heart failure care ranks among the leading U.S. healthcare expenditures. Additionally, the toll of heart failure on life, both in quality and longevity, is sobering.

Now for the good news! The American Heart Association has amassed a wealth of robust heart failure-related resources, newly aligned into a comprehensive offering to help you take the failure out of heart failure. Target: HF draws from the American Heart Association's vast collection of content-rich resources for patients and healthcare professionals, including educational tools, prevention programs, treatment guidelines, quality initiatives and outcome-based programs.

What is Heart Failure?

The term "heart failure" makes it sound like the heart is no longer working at all and there's nothing that can be done. Actually, heart failure means that the heart isn't pumping as well as it should be.

Your body depends on the heart's pumping action to deliver oxygen- and nutrient-rich blood to the body's cells. When the cells are nourished properly, the body can function normally.

With heart failure, the weakened heart can't supply the cells with enough blood. This results in fatigue and shortness of breath. Everyday activities such as walking, climbing stairs or carrying groceries can become very difficult.

Heart failure is a serious condition, and usually there's no cure. But many people with heart failure lead a full, enjoyable life when the condition is managed with medications and healthy lifestyle changes. It's also helpful to have the support of family and friends who understand your condition.

10 ways to reduce your risk of heart failure....

1. **Quit Smoking**
2. **Get enough sleep**
3. **Manage stress**
4. **Exercise**
5. **Eat a heart-healthy diet**
6. **Monitor your blood pressure**
7. **Limit caffeine**
8. **Limit alcohol**
9. **Lose or maintain weight**
10. **Watch for symptoms and consult a physician regularly**



Links that might interest you:

<http://www.hearthealthyonline.com/>

<http://www.fi.edu/learn/heart/healthy/exercise.html>

<http://www.heart.com/heart-healthy-exercise-activities.html>

Visit www.heart.org for more info!
(Information provided by the American Heart Association)

