

# CONGESTIVE HEART FAILURE

## Background

- Heart disease is America's leading killer in both men and women. Congestive heart failure is included in this category (American Heart Association).
- Congestive heart failure is “a common form of heart failure that results in a patient retaining excessive fluid, often leading to swelling of the legs and ankles and congestion in the lungs” (American Heart Association).
- When the heart stops pumping effectively, the blood pools in the heart and backs up into the lungs, or doesn't make it back to the heart through the veins and pools in the extremities; this is when heart failure is called congestive (American Heart Association).
- Heart failure results in an enlarged heart, shortness of breath, and tiredness (American Heart Association).
- Heart failure is a chronic condition, without a cure. (American Heart Association).
- “The leading causes of heart failure are diseases that damage the heart. These include [coronary artery disease](#) (CAD), [high blood pressure](#), and [diabetes](#)” (NHLBI).
- “Heart failure is a very common condition. About 5 million people in the United States have heart failure, and it results in about 300,000 deaths each year” (NHLBI).
- The body compensates for the hearts lack of pumping ability by enlarging, becoming more muscular, and pumping faster. This is why people may not feel

any different until years after the condition of their heart began to decline  
(American Heart Association).

### **Statement of Issue**

- A diseased heart causes congestive heart failure, and heart disease is the leading cause of death in Americans (Healthy People 2010, 2007).
- Goal: “Improve cardiovascular health and quality of life through the prevention, detection, and treatment of risk factors; early identification and treatment of heart attacks and strokes; and prevention of recurrent cardiovascular events” (Healthy People 2010, n.d.).
- People are often unaware that they have high blood pressure and high cholesterol that contribute to congestive heart failure (Healthy People 2010).
- “Heart failure (HF) incidence approaches 10 per 1,000 population after age 65” (American Heart Association, 2008, p. 21).
- “Seventy-five percent of HF cases have antecedent hypertension” (American Heart Association, 2008, p. 21).
- Goal: “Reduce hospitalizations of older adults with congestive heart failure as the principal diagnosis” (Healthy People 2010, n.d.).
- According to Healthy People 2010 (2008, p. 21), the number of hospitalizations because of congestive heart failure should be decreased:

Objective	Reduction in Hospitalizations of Older Adults With Congestive Heart Failure as the Principal Diagnosis	1997	Baseline	2010	Target
			<i>Per 1,000 Population</i>		
<b>12-6a.</b>	Adults aged 65 to 74 years		13.2		6.5
<b>12-6b.</b>	Adults aged 75 to 84 years		26.7		13.5
<b>12-6c.</b>	Adults aged 85 years and older		52.7		26.5

### **Epidemiologic Picture**

- “In general, the heart disease death rate has been consistently higher in males than in females and higher in the African American population than in the white population” (Healthy People 2010, n.d.).
- “About 22 percent of male and 46 percent of female heart attack (MI) victims will be disabled with HF within six years” (American Heart Association, 2008, p. 21).
- Women have a poorer outcome after heart attack, which may lead to congestive heart failure (Healthy People 2010, 2007).
- As Americans increase in age, more women than men have higher blood pressure (American Heart Association, 2008, p. 21).
- “High blood pressure is known as the “silent killer” and remains a major risk factor for CHD, stroke, and heart failure. About 50 million adults in the United States have high blood pressure. High blood pressure also is more common in older persons” (Healthy People 2010, n.d.).
- Mayo Clinic researchers found a strong correlation to diabetes and heart failure (American Heart Association, 2008, p. 21).

- “The 2004 overall total mention death rate for HF was 52.0. Total mention death rates were 63.2 for white males, 78.8 for black males, 43.5 for white females and 58.7 for black females. (*NCHS and NHLBI*)” (*American Heart Association, 2008, p. 21*).

## **Solutions**

- **American Heart Association** promotes the **DASH diet**, which reduces the amount of sodium in the diet, and increases the number of fruits and vegetables in order to promote heart health.
- **National High Blood Pressure Education Program** led by the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (NHLBI) is a public campaign to spread awareness of the importance of maintaining a healthy blood pressure.
- **The Heart Truth**, most well known for its little red dress pin, “is a national awareness campaign that warns post-reproductive age women about heart disease and provides guidance to help them take action against its risk factors, which generally begin to increase between the ages of 40 and 60” (Healthy People 2010, 2007).
- Follow “a heart healthy diet, not smoking, doing physical activity, and losing weight if you’re [overweight or obese](#)” (NHLBI).
- Meet regularly with your doctor to control high blood pressure and diabetes (NHLBI).
- “People who have heart failure can live longer and more active lives if it’s diagnosed early and they follow their treatment plans. For most, treatment includes medicines and lifestyle measures” (NHLBI).

- “The lifetime risk for developing CHD is very high in the United States: one of every two males and one of every three females aged 40 years and under will develop CHD sometime in their life. Primary prevention, specifically through lifestyle interventions that promote heart-healthy behaviors, is a major strategy to reduce the development of heart disease or stroke” (Healthy People 2010, n.d.).
- Attend blood pressure and cholesterol screenings (Healthy People 2010, n.d.).
- Control BMI and maintain healthy weight (Healthy People 2010, n.d.).
- Becoming more aware of signs and symptoms of heart failure and related heart conditions in order to prevent heart failure (Healthy People 2010, n.d.).

### **Additional Internet Resources**

Mayo Clinic. *Heart failure*

<http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/heart-failure/DS00061>

Medline Plus. *Heart failure.*

<http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/ency/article/000158.htm>

Texas Heart Institute. *Congestive heart failure.*

<http://www.texasheartinstitute.org/HIC/Topics/Cond/CHF.cfm>

### **Bibliography**

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## Congestive Heart Failure Handout

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