

# THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT HEART FAILURE WITH PRESERVED EJECTION FRACTION (DIASTOLIC DYSFUNCTION)

## What is diastolic dysfunction?

- Heart failure is when the heart is unable to pump blood effectively.
- In some patients, this results from processes that make it harder for the heart to relax or fill between beats (diastolic dysfunction).
- Unlike in other patients with heart failure, a measurement of how well the heart beats, the ejection fraction, is normal.

## What are risk factors for diastolic dysfunction?

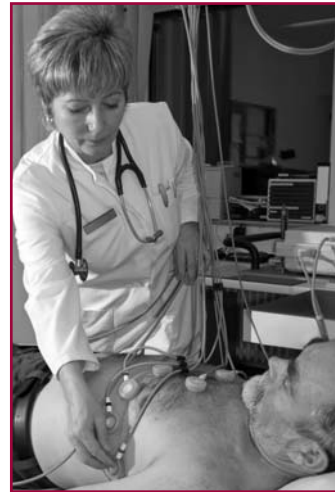
- Older than 45 years.
- High blood pressure.
- Aortic stenosis (narrowing of the aortic heart valve).
- Atherosclerosis (clogged arteries).
- Diabetes.
- More common in women.

## What are the symptoms?

- Shortness of breath.
- Irregular or abnormal heart beat.
- Fatigue.
- Light-headedness or fainting.

## How is it diagnosed?

- Your doctor will ask you questions about your health and conduct a careful physical examination.
- He or she may order an imaging test called an echocardiography (a sonogram of the heart); this is often combined with a stress test to show how blood is flowing in the heart during exercise.



- Cardiac catheterization, in which a thin tube is inserted into the heart, may be warranted to learn more about its functioning.
- Blood tests may be done.

## How is it treated?

- Smoking cessation, physical activity, and dietary changes.
- Treatment for conditions that can stiffen the left ventricle (high blood pressure, high cholesterol, diabetes).
- Medications may include:
  - Beta-blockers to slow the heart rate.
  - Calcium-channel blockers to reduce ventricular stiffness.
  - Angiotensin-converting enzyme (ACE) inhibitors.
  - Diuretics to reduce fluid accumulation.
  - Cardiac catheterization or surgery to fix problems, such as narrowed or obstructed blood vessels.

## For More Information

[www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/ency/article/000158.htm](http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/ency/article/000158.htm)  
[www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/ency/article/000176.htm](http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/ency/article/000176.htm)  
Information on heart failure and chronic mitral regurgitation from the National Institutes of Health MedlinePlus.

<http://familydoctor.org/online/famdocen/home/common/heartdisease/risk/292.html>  
<http://familydoctor.org/online/famdocen/home/common/heartdisease/risk/092.html>

Information on assessing your risk for heart disease and on ways to lower high blood pressure from the American Academy of Family Physicians.

[www.heart.org/HEARTORG/Conditions/HeartFailure/HeartFailureTools/Resources/Patient-Information-Sheets-Heart-Failure\\_UCM\\_306377\\_Article.jsp](http://www.heart.org/HEARTORG/Conditions/HeartFailure/HeartFailureTools/Resources/Patient-Information-Sheets-Heart-Failure_UCM_306377_Article.jsp)

Patient resources about heart failure, including questions to ask your doctor, from the American Heart Association.

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