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

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