

> What is heart failure?

Heart failure is a condition in which the heart does not pump enough blood to meet all the needs of the body. This usually occurs because the heart has become weak or your heart muscle is damaged.

> What are the symptoms?

- Shortness of breath after activity or at rest
- Rapid or irregular heart beat
- Swelling of feet, ankles and abdomen
- Feeling tired most of the time and finding exercise exhausting
- A persistent cough, a fast heart rate and dizziness in some people

> What are the causes?

The most common cause of heart failure in the UK is coronary heart disease. Heart failure is also common in patients with high blood pressure and in those who have had a heart attack in the past.

Heart failure can also be caused by:

- Alcohol or drug abuse
- Congenital heart conditions
- A viral infection affecting the heart muscle
- An uncontrolled irregular heart rhythm (arrhythmia)

> What about treatment?

Treatment aims to control symptoms and slow the progression of the condition. Common treatments include:

- Making lifestyle changes such as eating a healthy diet, regular physical activity and stopping smoking
- Medication – a range of medication can help
- Devices implanted in your chest can help control your heart rhythm
- Surgery – bypass operation or a heart transplant

References

British Heart Foundation: <https://www.bhf.org.uk/heart-health/conditions/heart-failure>

Nice guidelines: <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/cg108/chapter/Introduction>

NHS UK: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/heart-failure/>

Did you know that?

- Around 900 000 people in the UK have heart failure.
- Excess amounts of salt and fluid can build-up in organs and tissues causing swelling.
- Too much salt in the body can cause fluid retention, making heart failure worse.
- Caffeine and soft drinks can cause high blood pressure and make your heart race and not pump properly.

Self Care Tips

- Eat a low salt diet.
- Monitor and control your fluid intake. Limit your fluid intake to 1.5 litres to avoid fluid overload.
- Check your weight regularly.
- Eat at least 5 portions of fruit and vegetables per day.
- Get your annual flu jab. You can get vaccinated at your local GP surgery or pharmacies offering flu jabs.
- Take your medicines as prescribed. If you have any problems with your medicines, talk to your doctor or pharmacist.

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To contact Bromley Well call the Single Point of Access on **0808 278 7898** or direct Lifestyle Support lines **07985 431484 / 07985 444210** Email enquiry@bromleywell.org.uk www.bromleywell.org.uk



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> Other resources

<p>British Heart Foundation</p> <p>www.bhf.org.uk</p> <p>Help Line 0300 330 3311 0808 802 1234</p> <p>heretohelp@bhf.org.uk</p> <p>Support groups - British Heart Foundation - BHF</p>	<p>A national charity providing information and advice for the public and for health professionals. A really useful site containing lifestyle advice, the latest research and information about tests and treatments.</p> <p>BHF support groups in London, options to join the online support community.</p>
<p>Heart UK</p>	<p>National cholesterol charity providing support and advice for people concerned about cholesterol. A great website packed with advice on healthy eating and maintaining a healthy weight, including recipe ideas and diet plans.</p>
<p>NHS Live Well</p>	<p>NHS Live Well pages have information on topics such as eating well, exercise and maintaining a healthy weight.</p>
<p>NHS Conditions Heart Failure</p>	<p>NHS conditions pages contain information about the causes, symptoms and treatment of heart disease and advice for people living with the condition.</p>
<p>NHS Wellbeing Apps</p>	<p>Links to NHS Wellbeing Apps designed to support you in making healthy lifestyle changes.</p>

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