

Focus On: Heart Failure

Your heart is a muscle that pumps blood throughout your body by relaxing and filling the chambers of the heart with blood.

Then it contracts to send the oxygen and nutrient-filled blood around your body.

When your heart muscle doesn't pump as much blood as you need, it's called heart failure.

There are two main types of heart failure: diastolic and systolic.

With diastolic heart failure, the heart's left ventricle is stiff and thickened.

The heart has a hard time relaxing and filling with blood. This type of heart failure is also called heart failure with preserved ejection fraction.

With systolic heart failure, the heart's left ventricle is weak and may be enlarged.

The heart has a hard time contracting and pumping out blood. This type of heart failure is also called heart failure with reduced ejection fraction.

With either type of heart failure, less blood is pumped out to the body.

Early on, you may not notice any symptoms.

But as heart failure gets worse, you may feel weak, lightheaded, and very tired. And you may be short of breath and have swelling in your body and tissues.

Heart failure is a lifelong disease. And it tends to get worse over time. But treatment can slow the disease, help you feel better, and help keep you out of the hospital.

To learn more about heart failure, talk to your doctor.