

THE
Educated Patient[®]

Heart Failure

RESOURCE GUIDE



A collection of resources that provide information and support for patients and the professionals who treat them.

From the Publisher

Understanding and Managing Heart Failure

According to the Heart Failure Society of America (HFSA), nearly 5 million people in this country are affected by heart failure. This year, more than 400,000 people will be diagnosed with heart failure, and the condition will be responsible for more hospitalizations than all forms of cancer combined.¹ Heart failure is associated with potentially severe complications and can be deadly if left untreated. The CDC estimates that nearly 1 in 9 deaths in 2011 included heart failure as a contributing factor. Half of all people who develop heart failure die within 5 years of receiving a diagnosis.²

One of the reasons that heart failure can be difficult to diagnose and treat is that many of the symptoms associated with the condition, such as shortness of breath and fatigue, can appear to be mild or even ignored by patients as “just part of getting older.”¹

Successful management of heart failure depends on early diagnosis and treatment. Patients should be aware of the risk factors associated with heart failure, as well as the early warning signs and symptoms. Educating yourself to better understand heart failure will help you work with your physician to get the best care possible and achieve better outcomes. As the HFSA has noted, “If you think you may be at risk for heart failure, visit your doctor as soon as possible. Based on taking your medical history, examining you, and you having the necessary tests, your doctor can tell if you have heart failure and how it can be managed.”¹

This resource guide includes information on heart failure symptoms, risk factors, stages, the condition’s impact on quality of life, treatment options, and more. The information in this guide also describes resources and assistance programs offered by several organizations in the United States. These organizations provide credible informational resources, and many provide support in the form of financial assistance and toll-free patient support hotlines. These organizations also provide a forum for patients and caregivers to engage in communities that communicate through online message boards, e-mail, social media, and in-person meetings and seminars.

We hope this educational resource improves your knowledge and understanding of heart failure and provides information that helps prepare you to discuss your condition with your physician and the other members of your healthcare team.

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Information About Heart Failure

What Is Heart Failure?

The typical healthy heart is essentially a muscular pump responsible for supplying oxygenated blood and other nutrients to the organs and tissues of the body. Contractions of the heart drive blood through the body's vasculature to deliver oxygen, carbon dioxide, and other important components to individual tissues. The heart plays a central role not only in the cardiovascular system but in the other systems of our body as well by nourishing tissues so that our organs can remain healthy and function properly.¹

Heart failure is a chronic, progressive condition in which damage to the heart causes the cardiovascular system to weaken over time. This injury results in the inability of the heart muscle to pump enough blood to meet the body's need for oxygen and nutrients. In the initial stages of heart failure, the heart undergoes several *compensatory mechanisms** in an attempt to keep up with its workload. These changes often go unnoticed by the patient in the earlier stages of the disease. The heart may stretch its chambers and promote more muscle mass so that it can contract more forcefully to pump additional blood, or it may pump more quickly to increase cardiac output. The body also responds to the heart's impairment by narrowing blood vessels to keep blood pressure higher than normal so that the heart does not have to exert as much force. The benefits of these approaches, however, are short-lived, and they can be harmful as the condition progresses.¹

Heart failure is classified by the specific part of the heart that is affected. For example, heart failure involving the heart's left chambers is known as left-sided heart failure, and conditions concerning the right chambers are called right-sided heart failure. Heart failure tends to first affect the left side, but can eventually progress to affect both sides.^{1,2} *Congestive heart failure* is a term that refers to heart failure in the presence of hallmark symptoms of swelling, or *edema*, and difficulty breathing. These symptoms occur as a consequence of fluid collecting in the legs, ankles, and lungs.²

How Do I Get Heart Failure?

In the setting of heart failure, injury to the heart threatens its ability to function as a pump. The injury can be caused by a restriction of blood supply to the heart or by chronically high blood pressure, leading to a surge in the heart's workload. Many of the lifestyle components that influence your risk of

heart attack and stroke can also contribute to the development of heart failure. These include smoking, being overweight, following an unhealthy diet, and physical inactivity.³

Heart failure can develop from the additional weight of health conditions that either directly injure the heart or stress the heart by causing it to work too hard. The following conditions can put individuals at higher risk for heart failure³:

- Abnormal heart valves
- High blood pressure
- *Coronary artery disease*
- Diabetes
- Previous history of heart attack
- Severe lung disease
- Sleep apnea

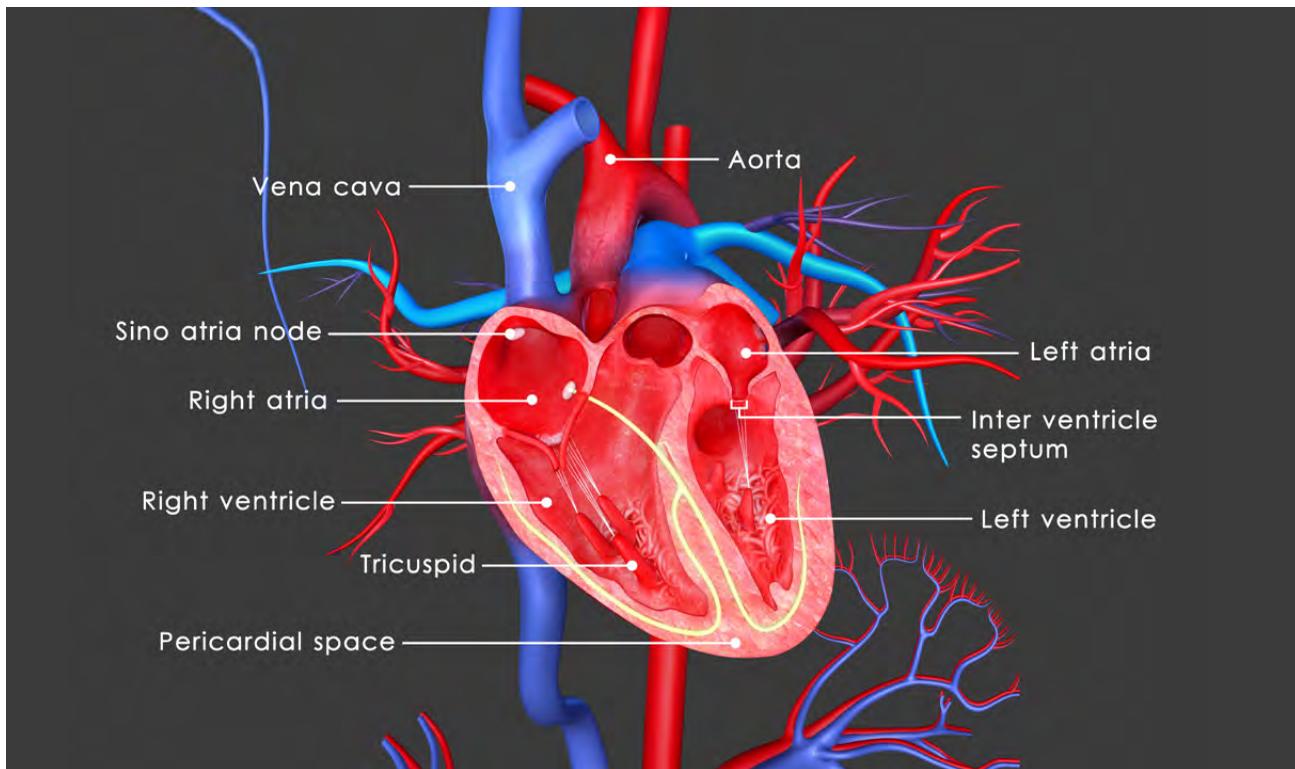
Having more than one of these conditions considerably increases an individual's risk for heart failure, but properly managing these conditions and making the appropriate lifestyle changes can reduce risk.³

What Are the Symptoms of Heart Failure?

It is possible to develop heart failure and be unaware of it. In the early stages of the disease, symptoms may not be present or may not point clearly to heart failure. The symptoms associated with heart failure tend to manifest when the heart and body can no longer keep up with the heart's functional decline, which may be several years after the heart begins to weaken.¹ Many symptoms of heart failure are the consequence of the accumulation of fluid in your body, such as swelling of the ankles. The following are common symptoms that can occur with heart failure:

- **Increased heart rate:** To counteract its inability to pump as much as it once could, the heart beats faster.⁴
- **Shortness of breath (*dyspnea*):** As the heart cannot keep up with the supply of blood coming in, fluid collects in the vessels that bring blood back from the lungs to the heart. This causes fluid to accumulate in the lungs, making breathing more difficult.⁴
- **Persistent coughing or wheezing:** This symptom is also the consequence of too much fluid building up in the lungs. It tends to be exacerbated at nighttime and when you are lying down.^{4,5}
- **Swollen ankles or legs (*edema*):** As blood flow from the heart diminishes over the years, blood returning to the heart through the veins backs up, causing fluid to build up in the tissues. Additionally, the kidneys are affected over

*For a description of italicized terms, please see the glossary on page 9.



time and cannot eliminate sodium and water, which also results in fluid retention in the tissues.⁴

- **Fatigue:** The heart loses its ability to pump enough blood to meet the demands of all the body's tissues. In response, the body starts to prioritize which vital organs are most in need of blood and redirects blood from the organs whose need is less critical, such as the muscles in the limbs, to the heart and the brain.⁴
- **Lack of appetite:** Complications in digestion can stem from a loss of blood flow to the digestive system. Fluid can also accumulate in the digestive organs, causing you to feel full and bloated.^{4,6}
- **Confusion or impaired thinking:** Fluctuating levels of blood nutrients, such as sodium, may cause confusion.⁴

How Is Heart Failure Diagnosed?

If you have experienced any symptoms of heart failure, you should talk to a healthcare professional. Your physician will order tests and procedures to help determine whether you have heart failure and how advanced the condition is.

Physicians classify heart failure by assessing the severity of an individual's symptoms as well as the risk factors and damage that may have already happened to the heart. Clinicians use 2 scoring systems in combination. The first system is known as the New York Heart Association (NYHA) Functional Classification, in which patients are grouped into

class I, II, III, or IV based on the extent of limitation they experience during physical activity.^{7,8} The other system, created by the American College of Cardiology/American Heart Association, stages heart failure using the letters A to D. The higher the number or letter of the class or stage, the more progressive is the disease. Knowing an individual's class and stage of heart failure helps physicians decide on the best approach in preventing or managing the disease.⁸

In general, a diagnosis of heart failure is made given your medical and family histories, a physical exam, and test results. These tests may include blood tests, chest x-rays, magnetic resonance imaging, and electrocardiograms.⁹ No single test can diagnose heart failure,¹⁰ but your physician may recommend one or both of the following common diagnostic procedures to aid in the process.

- **Ejection fraction (EF):** EF evaluates the volume of blood pumped out of the heart with each contraction. A healthy individual's EF ranges from 55% to 70% and can vary depending on the heart condition and the success of the therapies that have been prescribed. Your EF is usually measured at the time of diagnosis and again as needed based on changes in your condition. It can be measured in your physician's office through several tests, such as echocardiography, cardiac catheterization, or a nuclear medicine scan.⁹

- **B-type natriuretic peptide (BNP) blood test:** BNP is a chemical made by your heart in response to shifts in pressure that occur when heart failure develops and worsens. BNP levels are low when heart failure is stable and rise when the condition worsens.⁹ Measuring the amount of BNP in your blood enables physicians to detect signs of heart failure in its initial stages, when it may be especially difficult to differentiate the condition from other disorders.¹¹

Can Heart Failure Be Treated?

Heart failure caused by damage to the heart that has developed over time cannot be cured,¹ but it can be effectively treated with methods that have been shown to improve symptoms. Early diagnosis and treatment can help individuals who have heart failure live long and healthy lives. The specific type of treatment your physician will prescribe for you will depend on the severity of your condition. Treatment objectives for everyone with heart failure are centered around relieving symptoms, controlling the underlying cause, and preventing the condition from worsening.¹²

When prescribing medications, your physician will take into consideration the type of heart failure you have, the stage of heart failure you are in, and your response to treatments. Some medications work by relaxing blood vessels so that your heart does not have to work as hard to pump blood, while other treatments make the heart beat stronger so that it is able to pump more blood. Common medications used to treat heart failure are classified as follows¹²:

- **Diuretics** and **aldosterone antagonists** help reduce fluid accumulation in your lungs and swelling in your feet and ankles. They prompt the body to eliminate salt and water by increasing urination, thereby also lowering the amount of blood that the heart must pump.
- **Angiotensin-converting enzyme (ACE) inhibitors**, **angiotensin receptor blockers (ARBs)**, and **beta-blockers** decrease blood pressure and lower your heart's workload and the amount of stress placed on your heart. ACE inhibitors may also reduce your risk of a future heart attack.

As the condition progresses, lifestyle modifications and medications may not be enough to manage symptoms. Your physician may recommend a medical procedure or surgery, such as a cardiac resynchronization therapy (CRT) device (a type of pacemaker) or an implantable cardioverter defibrillator (ICD), in addition to medications.¹²

As researchers grasp new concepts regarding heart failure as a disease, newer medications and treatment modalities are continually under investigation. If you have heart failure, you may want to ask your physician about participating in research studies called *clinical trials*, which offer care from experts in the field and the opportunity to be a part of the advancement of heart failure knowledge and treatment.¹²

Your Healthcare Team

Your general practitioner (also called your *primary care physician*, or *PCP*) may be the first member of your healthcare team to recommend tests for heart failure. If your PCP suspects you have heart failure, he or she may refer you to a specialist, such as a *cardiologist*, and together they will coordinate your care. In addition to your PCP and cardiologist, your healthcare team may include a *physical therapist*, *occupational therapist*, dietician, surgeon, or a combination of these. You may not see all of them during the course of your care, but each has a specific role to play in the optimization of your care.¹³

How Can I Prevent Heart Failure From Worsening?

You can take several actions to prevent heart failure from worsening. The sooner you do, the better are your chances of preventing decline from the disease. Individuals who have a healthy heart can help prevent disease by following a healthy diet, being physically active (under physician supervision), losing weight if they are overweight or obese, and if they smoke, quitting.¹⁴

Individuals who have coronary artery disease, high blood pressure, or diabetes are at high risk for heart failure, but can still take action to reduce their risk by managing these conditions. In addition to following the recommendations outlined above, these individuals should avoid drinking alcohol and should regularly follow up with their physicians for ongoing care.¹⁴

If you have heart damage but no signs of heart failure, you can still reduce your risk of worsening this condition. You should not only take into consideration the steps mentioned above, but also take your medications as prescribed, as they help reduce your heart's workload.¹⁴ See page 7 of this guide for additional information on staying healthy and maintaining a good quality of life.

Health, Diet, and Emotional Support

Health

It is important to follow your physician's recommendations regarding diet, exercise, and other lifestyle modifications, which can help alleviate symptoms, slow the progression of heart failure, and improve your everyday life.¹⁴

In addition to adopting a healthy lifestyle, you should watch for signs that may indicate your heart failure is getting worse, such as weight gain, which could suggest that fluid is inappropriately accumulating in your body. Speak to your healthcare professional to confirm that you are staying current with your vaccination schedule; it helps to avoid respiratory infections, such as influenza and pneumonia, from occurring with heart failure.¹²

Diet

Maintaining a heart-healthy diet is critical in managing heart failure—a balanced diet can assist in better heart function, but a poor diet may worsen the condition.¹² Adopting a healthy diet can also reduce and/or eliminate some risk factors by

decreasing body weight, reducing *low-density lipoprotein (LDL) cholesterol*, and lowering blood pressure, blood sugars, and triglycerides. You don't have to be afraid that your new dietary plan will prevent you from eating any of your favorite foods ever again. Effective nutrition plans are designed to spotlight the foods you can and should eat, and researchers have demonstrated that including certain foods in your diet is just as necessary as limiting others. Ask your healthcare team to organize a diet strategy that you believe you can successfully follow.¹⁵

A healthy diet should be rich in vegetables and fruits, whole grains, fat-free or low-fat dairy products, and protein foods. Include foods from all food groups to help ensure a balanced diet. Protein foods include lean meats, poultry without skin, seafood, eggs, nuts, seeds, beans, and peas. A healthy diet is low in sodium, solid fats, added sugars, and refined grains. Too much sodium, or salt, can cause extra fluid to build up in your body, worsening heart failure.¹²

It is also important for people who have heart failure to drink the correct amounts and types of fluids. Drinking too much fluid can worsen heart failure, and people who have this condition should avoid consuming any alcohol.¹²

Emotional Support

Discussing your diagnosis and treatment with your loved ones, caregiver, and/or healthcare team can help ease the burden and stress of having heart failure. Friends, family, and caregivers can provide comfort, motivation, and support. It also helps to learn as much as you can about the condition by asking your physician any questions you have, and also asking for guidance on finding additional resources. Once you know what to expect, you can discuss your situation with your family and other individuals involved in managing your care. In this guide, we've identified a number of website resources to assist you in getting started with finding help, as well as patient support groups in your area that will enable you to share your experiences and concerns with other patients via blogs and message boards.



Frequently Asked Questions

What is heart failure?

Heart failure is a condition in which the heart cannot pump enough blood to meet the body's needs and which often results in symptoms of shortness of breath, fatigue, and the retention of fluid.^{4,16}

How common is heart failure?

Approximately 5.1 million people in the United States have heart failure. In 2009, 1 in 9 deaths in the United States included heart failure as a contributing cause.¹⁷

What causes heart failure?

The leading causes of heart failure are diseases that damage the heart, such as coronary artery disease, high blood pressure, and diabetes.¹⁶

Who is at risk for heart failure?

Diseases that damage your heart, such as coronary artery disease, high blood pressure, and diabetes, can increase your risk for heart failure. You can also increase your risk by smoking tobacco, not getting enough physical activity, being obese, and eating foods high in fat, cholesterol, and sodium.¹⁷

How do I know if I have heart failure?

Common symptoms of heart failure include shortness of breath, having trouble breathing when lying down, weight gain with swelling in the feet, legs, ankles, or stomach, and generally feeling tired or weak.¹⁷ If you have any of these symptoms, you should inform your physician, who may recommend tests and other procedures that can help diagnose heart failure.

How is heart failure treated?

Although there is no cure for this condition,¹ treatments exist that help alleviate symptoms and improve quality of life. Treatment usually involves taking medications, reducing sodium in the diet, and getting daily physical activity.¹⁷



Glossary of Important Terms

Aldosterone antagonist: a class of medication that helps the body eliminate salt and water through urination to lower the volume of blood that the heart must pump

Angiotensin-converting enzyme (ACE) inhibitor: a class of medication that lowers blood pressure, reduces strain on the heart, and decreases the risk of a future heart attack

Angiotensin receptor blocker (ARB): a class of medication that relaxes the blood vessels and lowers blood pressure to decrease the heart's workload

B-type natriuretic peptide (BNP): a substance secreted by the heart in response to changes in pressure that occur when heart failure develops and worsens

Beta-blocker: a class of medication that slows your heart rate and lowers your blood pressure to decrease the heart's workload

Cardiologist: a physician who specializes in disorders of the heart

Clinical trial: a research study that investigates how well new medical approaches work in people

Compensatory mechanism: an action performed by the body to maintain physiologic processes despite a shift in normal function

Congestive heart failure: a condition in which the body's tissues are not receiving as much blood and oxygen as needed, resulting in one of the common symptoms of fluid retention

Coronary artery disease: a condition involving the buildup of plaque in the heart's arteries

Diuretic: also known as a water pill, a class of medications that reduce the accumulation of fluid in the lungs and swelling in the feet and ankles

Dyspnea: a feeling associated with impaired breathing, such as shortness of breath

Edema: swelling of the body's tissues caused by excess fluid

Ejection fraction (EF): a measurement of how well your heart is pumping

Low-density lipoprotein (LDL) cholesterol: also known as "bad" cholesterol, a substance that contributes to the buildup of plaque in the arteries

Occupational therapist: a professional who assists in maintaining an individual's daily living and work skills

Physical therapist: a professional who helps individuals reduce pain and improve mobility

Primary care physician (PCP): a physician who provides a patient with preventive healthcare, including physical exams and basic tests

Questions to Ask Your Physician^{18,19}

What's my diagnosis? Is the heart failure mild? Moderate? Severe?

What is most likely the cause of my symptoms?

Are there other possible causes for my symptoms?

How is my condition likely to progress?

What kinds of tests will I need?

Do these tests require any special preparation?

What treatments are available? Which do you recommend for me?

What treatment side effects should I monitor for? What should I do if I begin experiencing any side effects?

What are some specific ways in which daily life will change?

What are the 3 most important things I can do to manage my condition?

What foods should I eat or avoid?

What's an appropriate level of physical activity?

How often should I be screened for changes in my condition?

I have other health conditions. How can I best manage these conditions together?

Is there a generic alternative to the medicine you're prescribing for me?

If any symptoms seem to get worse or change suddenly, what's the best way for me to contact you?

Do my family members need to be screened for conditions that may cause heart failure?

Are there any brochures or other printed materials that I can take home with me?

What support programs are available for my family and me?

Who can I speak with about my financial and/or insurance concerns?

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American Heart Association—Heart Failure

www.heart.org/HEARTORG/Conditions/HeartFailure/Heart-Failure_UCM_002019_SubHomePage.jsp

The screenshot shows the American Heart Association website interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links for 'LOCAL INFO', 'LANGUAGES', 'CAREERS', 'VOLUNTEER', and a 'DONATE' button. Below this is a search bar and social media icons for Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and Google+. A secondary navigation bar lists various health conditions: 'GETTING HEALTHY', 'CONDITIONS', 'HEALTHCARE / RESEARCH', 'CAREGIVER', 'EDUCATOR', 'CPR & ECC', 'SHOP', 'CAUSES', 'ADVOCATE', 'GIVING', and 'NEWS'. Under 'CONDITIONS', several sub-categories are listed, including 'Arrhythmia', 'Cholesterol', 'Congenital Defects Children & Adults', 'Diabetes', 'Heart Attack', 'Heart Failure', 'High Blood Pressure', 'Stroke', and 'More'. The main content area features a large banner with a photograph of an elderly couple embracing, with the text 'our anniversary is why.' and 'SUPPORT NETWORK'. Below the banner, there are two featured articles: 'About Heart Failure' and 'Symptoms and Diagnosis of Heart Failure'.

ADDRESS:

7272 Greenville Avenue
Dallas, TX 75231

CONTACT INFO:

Phone: 1-800-242-8721
E-mail: Online

The American Heart Association (AHA) is a national voluntary health agency dedicated to helping reduce disability and death caused by cardiovascular diseases and stroke. The AHA funds innovative research, fights for stronger public health policies, and provides lifesaving tools and information to save and improve lives. The “Heart Failure” section of the AHA website provides a comprehensive review of heart failure and helpful resources to help patients become more involved in their own care. For additional support, visit supportnetwork.heart.org/home, an Internet community devoted to serving the needs of patients and their loved ones who have been affected by heart disease.

Resource Checklist

- ✓ Information on heart failure
- ✓ Interactive cardiovascular library
- ✓ Downloadable publications
- ✓ Information on advanced heart failure
- ✓ Medication tracker
- ✓ Monthly e-newsletter

CardioSmart-American College of Cardiology— Heart Failure

www.cardiosmart.org/Heart-Conditions/Heart-Failure

The screenshot shows the CardioSmart website interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links for HOME, ABOUT, A-Z TOPICS, GLOSSARY, TOOLS, VIDEOS, MI CORAZÓN, and ENGLISH. On the right, there are links for LOG IN / JOIN, HELP, and STORE. The CardioSmart logo is on the left, and a search bar is in the center. Below the navigation bar, there is a main menu with categories: Heart Conditions, Drugs & Treatments, Heart Basics, Healthy Living, Connect With Others, News & Events, and My Dashboard. The 'Heart Failure' section is highlighted. On the left, there is a sidebar with links: Heart Failure Home, Understand Your Condition, Questions to Ask Your Doctor, Your Responsibilities, Your Care Team, Getting Support, and The Research. Below this is a 'HELPFUL RESOURCES' section with links to Heart Failure Treatment Guidelines, Heart Failure Management Workbook, and Heart Failure: Checking. The main content area features a large image of a woman on a treadmill with the text: 'I was afraid to exercise. I am so thankful for cardiac rehab! Kimberly, heart failure patient'. Below the image is a yellow button that says 'Learn more about Heart Failure'. To the right of the image, there is a section titled 'Managing Heart Failure' with a photo of a man and a woman, and a link to 'Download Workbook'. Below that is a 'Get CardioSmart' section with 'YOU'RE INVITED' and two challenges: 'February Physical Activity Challenge' (Feb 01, 2015 - Mar 01, 2015, 14 Participants) and 'February Waist Measurement Challenge' (Feb 01, 2015 - Mar 01, 2015).

ADDRESS:

2400 N Street NW
Washington, DC 20037

CONTACT INFO:

Phone: 1-800-253-4636
E-mail: resource@acc.org

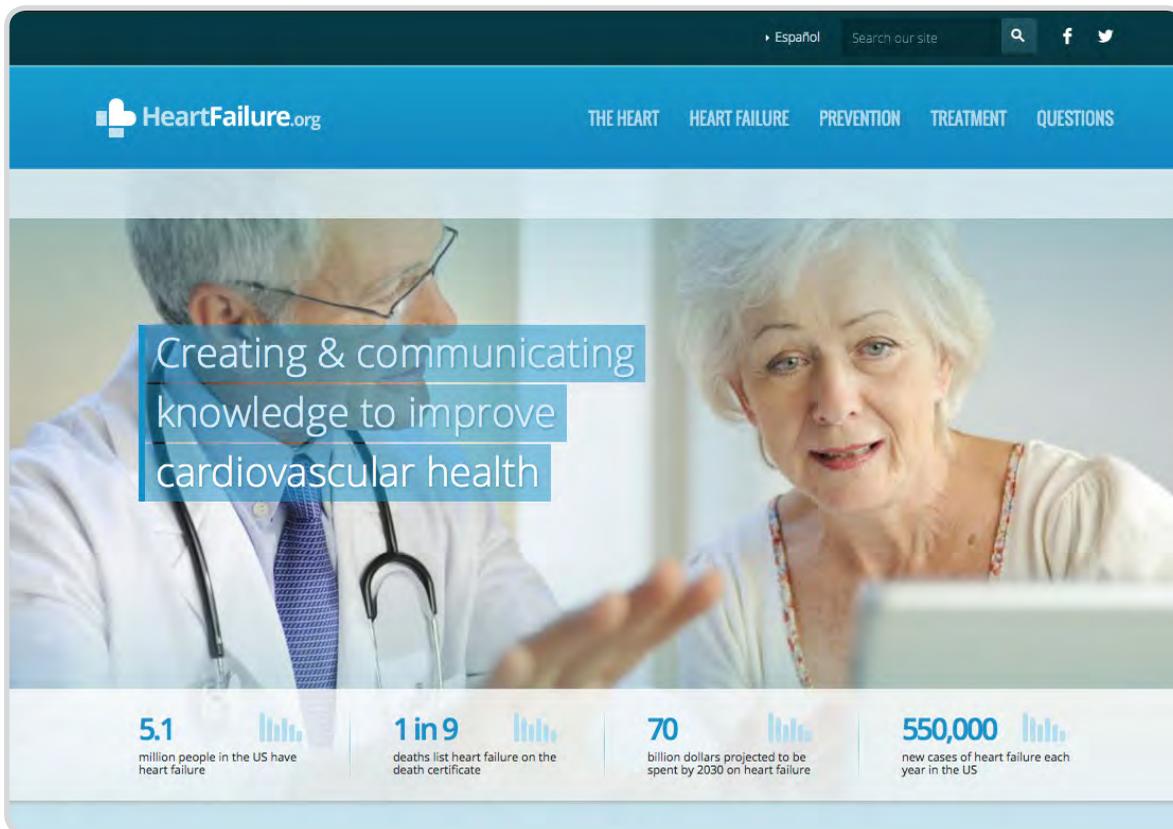
The mission of the American College of Cardiology (ACC) is to transform cardiovascular care and improve heart health. The ACC's CardioSmart website is a patient education and empowerment initiative that aims to help individuals prevent, treat, and manage cardiovascular disease. The "Heart Failure" section of the CardioSmart site provides extensive information to help patients understand and manage their condition and receive the support they need.

Resource Checklist

- ✓ Information on heart failure
- ✓ Heart failure management workbook
- ✓ Questions to ask your physician
- ✓ Information on healthcare professionals
- ✓ Recent news
- ✓ Tips for self-care

HeartFailure.org

www.heartfailure.org



CONTACT INFO:

E-mail: Online

HeartFailure.org was established to help deliver vital information about heart failure to patients and their families. The site is an easy-to-read resource filled with comprehensive, reliable information about all aspects of heart failure.

Resource Checklist

- ✓ Information on heart failure
- ✓ Information on common testing procedures
- ✓ Body mass index calculator
- ✓ Printable weight chart
- ✓ Glossary of terms
- ✓ Tips for self-care

Heartfailurematters.org

www.heartfailurematters.org

heartfailurematters.org

English

HEART FAILURE MATTERS:
PRACTICAL INFORMATION FOR PATIENTS, FAMILIES AND CAREGIVERS.

SCROLL DOWN

AN ANIMATED JOURNEY THROUGH HEART FAILURE

ADDRESS:

2035 Route des Colles
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Heartfailurematters.org is a website owned and operated by the Heart Failure Associate of the European Society of Cardiology. Heartfailurematters.org provides information on the different aspects of heart failure and a variety of tools and resources to help patients, caregivers, and loved ones navigate through the disease.

Resource Checklist

- ✓ Information on heart failure
- ✓ Questions to ask your physician
- ✓ Heart failure monitoring chart
- ✓ Symptom event diary
- ✓ Patient and caregiver videos
- ✓ Information for caregivers
- ✓ Animations on heart failure

Mayo Clinic—Heart Failure

www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/heart-failure/basics/definition/con-20029801

The screenshot shows the Mayo Clinic website interface. At the top left is the Mayo Clinic logo. A search bar is located at the top center. On the top right, there are links for 'Request an Appointment', 'Find a Doctor', 'Find a Job', and 'Give Now'. Below these are links for 'Log in to Patient Account' and 'Translated Content'. A navigation menu is located below the search bar, with categories like 'PATIENT CARE & HEALTH INFO', 'DEPARTMENTS & CENTERS', 'RESEARCH', 'EDUCATION', 'FOR MEDICAL PROFESSIONALS', 'PRODUCTS & SERVICES', and 'GIVING TO MAYO CLINIC'. A prominent blue button labeled 'Request Appointment' is visible. The main content area is titled 'Diseases and Conditions' and 'Heart failure'. Below this, there are tabs for 'Basics', 'Care at Mayo Clinic', 'In-Depth', 'Expert Answers', 'Multimedia', 'Resources', and 'News From Mayo Clinic'. The 'Definition' section is highlighted, with a sub-section 'By Mayo Clinic Staff'. The text defines heart failure as a condition where the heart muscle doesn't pump blood as well as it should. To the right, there is an advertisement for 'Atrial Fibrillation' with the text 'Get information on symptoms, diagnosis and treatment at Mayo Clinic.'

ADDRESS:
200 First Street SW
Rochester, MN 55905

CONTACT INFO:
Phone: (507) 284-2511
E-mail: Online

The Mayo Clinic strives to instill hope and contribute to health and well-being by providing the best care to every patient through integrated clinical practice, education, and research. Visit the “Heart failure” section of the Mayo Clinic’s website for information and resources specifically for people affected by heart failure. Here, site visitors can access information on all of the basics of heart failure, including symptoms, causes, complications, tests and diagnosis, lifestyle and home remedies, and coping and support.

Resource Checklist

- ✓ Information on heart failure
- ✓ Tips for preparing for medical appointments
- ✓ Tips for coping
- ✓ Additional resources
- ✓ Videos
- ✓ *Heart-Healthy Living* e-newsletter

National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute—Heart Failure

www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/health-topics/topics/hf

U.S. Department of Health & Human Services | NIH National Institutes of Health | Contact Us | Get Email Alerts | Font Size

NIH National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute

Accessible Search Form
NHLBI Entire Site SEARCH

Public | Health Professionals | Researchers | Clinical Trials | News & Resources | About NHLBI

Home » Health Information for the Public » Health Topics » Heart Failure

Explore Heart Failure | E-MAIL | PRINT | PRINT FULL TOPIC | SHARE

What Is Heart Failure?

Heart failure is a condition in which the heart can't pump enough blood to meet the body's needs. In some cases, the heart can't fill with enough blood. In other cases, the heart can't pump blood to the rest of the body with enough force. Some people have both problems.

The term "heart failure" doesn't mean that your heart has stopped or is about to stop working. However, heart failure is a serious condition that requires medical care.

Overview

Heart failure develops over time as the heart's pumping action grows weaker. The condition can affect the right side of the heart only, or it can affect both sides of the heart. Most cases involve both sides of the heart.

Right-side heart failure occurs if the heart can't pump enough blood to the lungs to pick up oxygen. Left-side heart failure occurs if the heart can't pump enough oxygen-rich blood to the rest of the body.

Right-side heart failure may cause fluid to build up in the feet, ankles, legs, liver, abdomen, and the veins in the neck. Right-side and left-side heart failure also may cause shortness of breath and fatigue (tiredness).

The leading causes of heart failure are diseases that damage the heart. Examples include [coronary heart disease \(CHD\)](#), [high blood pressure](#), and [diabetes](#).

Outlook

Heart failure is a very common condition. About 5.1 million people in the United States have heart failure.

Heart Failure Clinical Trials

[Clinical trials](#) are research studies that explore whether a medical strategy, treatment, or device is safe and effective for humans. To find clinical trials that are currently underway for Heart Failure, visit www.clinicaltrials.gov.

Heart Failure in the News

April 9, 2014
[Drug does not improve set of cardiovascular outcomes for diastolic heart failure](#)
A drug that blocks the action of a key hormone did not significantly improve a set of cardiovascular outcomes for patients with diastolic heart failure, a condition in which the heart...

ADDRESS:
PO Box 30105
Bethesda, MD 20824

CONTACT INFO:
Phone: (301) 592-8573
E-mail: nhlbiinfo@nhlbi.nih.gov

The National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (NHLBI) collaborates with patients, families, healthcare professionals, scientists, professional societies, patient advocacy groups, community organizations, and the media to provide leadership for research, training, and educational programs that promote the prevention and treatment of heart, lung, and blood diseases and enhance the health of all individuals so that they can live longer and more fulfilling lives.

Resource Checklist

- ✓ Information on heart failure
- ✓ Information on clinical trials
- ✓ Tips for coping
- ✓ Additional resources
- ✓ News

The Educated Patient®

www.TheEducatedPatient.com

ADDRESS:

666 Plainsboro Road
Suite 300
Plainsboro, NJ 08536

CONTACT INFO:

Phone: (609) 716-7777
E-mail: info@TheEducatedPatient.com

The Educated Patient® is a collection of disease-specific articles and resources designed to provide patients, their families, and their caregivers with information to help them better understand their condition and their options for self-care. Visit the “Heart Health” section of The Educated Patient® website for information and resources specifically for people affected by heart failure.

Resource Checklist

- ✓ Information on heart failure
- ✓ Feature articles
- ✓ *The OTC Guide*™ patient guides
- ✓ Cou-Co® resource for pharmacy coupons and co-pay assistance
- ✓ Additional resources

DailyStrength—Heart Failure Support Group

www.dailystrength.org/c/Heart-Failure/support-group

The screenshot shows the DailyStrength website interface. At the top, there are navigation links for Sharecare, The Dr. Oz Show, DailyStrength, and RealAge. The main header features the DailyStrength logo and a search bar. Below the header, there is a banner for the Heart Failure Support Group with the text "Free, anonymous support from people just like you. Join Now, Get Support!".

On the left side, there is a "MEMBER SIGN IN" section with fields for "Email or Username" and "Password", a "Remember me" checkbox, and "Login" and "Join Now" buttons. Below this is a promotional box asking "What would you do if you knew you could not fail?".

The main content area is titled "Heart Failure Support Group" and includes a sub-navigation menu: Home, Discussions, Health Blogs, Expert Answers, Treatments, Members, Goals, Groups. A search bar is also present. Below the navigation is a "Recent Discussions" table:

Topics	Replies	Last Post
ICD? and lifestyle changes	6	By Francesmeans... 02/16/15
Reliability of echocardiograms in ...	4	By INNURMIND 02/16/15
HARD TIME BREATHING	3	By Francesmeans... 02/13/15
New to forum, seeking feedback ...	11	By Francesmeans... 02/12/15
Cardiomyopathy what to expect	9	By pumpkinbread 02/02/15
Confused	4	By noisomuch29 01/28/15
Extremely worried about BP	1	By noisomuch29 01/28/15
ejection fraction	8	By Kezzigirl 01/26/15
Hello- 32 and newly diagnosed	5	By august2012 01/17/15
View DS Support Group.	1	By RoboPop 01/16/15
ICD Replacement	4	By RoboPop 01/13/15
HEART TRANSPLANT	2	By electricoo 01/12/15
Research Opportunity for CHF patients	0	By tothm21 01/05/15

On the right side, there is an advertisement for "CHANGE YOUR BRAIN CHANGE YOUR LIFE" by BrainFitLife, featuring a "LIMITED TIME OFFER" of \$8.25/MO. Below the advertisement is a "COMMUNITY ADVISORS" section listing Dr. Erminia Guarneri, Michael Roizen, MD, and Anthony Komaroff, MD.

ADDRESS:
3280 Peachtree Road
Suite 600
Atlanta, GA 30305

CONTACT INFO:
E-mail: Online

DailyStrength, a subsidiary of Sharecare, Inc, quotes itself as “the first truly interactive healthcare ecosystem giving consumers the ability to ask, learn, and act on the questions of health.” The DailyStrength online community, Heart Failure Support Group, includes free health information provided by advisors who are health experts in their respective areas of expertise, and anonymous support from other patients who have or have had heart failure.

Resource Checklist

- ✓ Blogs
- ✓ Expert answers
- ✓ Internet forum
- ✓ Additional resources

Inspire

www.inspire.com

email address password LOG IN Forgot password? Keep me logged in Not a member? JOIN NOW

Inspire together we're better Browse Our Health Communities Search

Become a Member

Join many others who understand what you're going through and are making important decisions about their health.

BROWSE OUR COMMUNITIES JOIN NOW

FEATURED PARTNER
Kari Luther Rosbeck
President and CEO
Tuberos Sclerosis Alliance

"Seeing our members meet up at our World Conference after having made such important connections online showed us the real impact of our Inspire community."

ADDRESS:

66 Witherspoon Street
Suite 402
Princeton, NJ 08540

CONTACT INFO:

Phone: 1-800-945-0381
E-mail: team@inspire.com

Inspire was created with the belief that patient contributions to medical progress have been historically underappreciated, and that progress in medical research will result from involving patients as well as fully valuing their contributions. This privately held company partners with organizations to provide online patient communities in a safe, privacy-protected environment.

Resource Checklist

- ✓ Information on heart failure
- ✓ Create-your-own-website feature
- ✓ Start an Inspire partner organization feature

Mended Hearts

<http://mendedhearts.org>

Officers Login | Members Login | Newsletter Sign-Up

♥ Donate | Sponsors | Find Chapters | Contact Us

Mended Hearts

About Us | Stories of Inspiration | Get Involved | Education | Resources | In the News

Heart Disease Ends With Me

As the oldest peer-to-peer cardiac support group in the country, Mended Hearts' 300 chapters and 20,000 members touch the lives of Americans in 48 states.

Our physician-endorsed support model assists patients and caregivers from diagnosis through the journey of recovery with social, emotional, and practical support.

[Learn more. »](#)

DRIVE4CLOTS.COM
Mended Hearts partners with Janssen in "Drive4Clots" campaign. [How you can help! »](#)

High Cholesterol Matters!
Why Cholesterol Matters: Why You Should Be Tested for High Cholesterol and FH [More »](#)

Mended Hearts Education & Training Conference
JUNE 24-27, 2015
ORLANDO, FL

Market Place

Find us on Facebook

Follow us on Twitter

Take the Cholesterol Counts Poll »

Chronic Heart Failure Go-to Guide [Access now »](#)

I Inspire others
Mended Hearts Heart Disease Support Community

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ADDRESS:

8150 N Central Expressway, M2248
Dallas, TX 75206

CONTACT INFO:

Phone: 1-888-HEART99

E-mail: info@mendedhearts.org

Mended Hearts is a national and community-based nonprofit organization that instills hope to heart disease patients, their families, and caregivers. The Mended Hearts Support Groups help inspire hope and work to improve the quality of life for heart patients and their families through ongoing peer-to-peer support. Volunteers of Mended Hearts offer this peer-to-peer support through in-person hospital visits, Internet communications, and contact with patients by telephone.

Resource Checklist

- ✓ Information on heart failure
- ✓ Information for caregivers
- ✓ Peer-to-peer support
- ✓ Videos
- ✓ Newsletters

WomenHeart: The National Coalition for Women with Heart Disease

www.womenheart.org

The screenshot shows the WomenHeart website homepage. At the top right, there are links for 'Contact Us', 'Sign In', and 'Register'. The main header features the WomenHeart logo (a red heart with 'WomenHeart' text) and the tagline 'Early detection. Accurate diagnosis. Proper treatment.' Below the logo is a navigation menu with items like 'Home', 'About Us', 'Find Support', 'Health Care Professionals', 'Programs', 'Events', 'Take Action', 'Resources', 'En Español', and 'Am I having a heart attack?'. A secondary navigation bar includes 'Store', 'Our Partners', 'Online Community', 'Contact', 'Media Room', and 'En Español'. Social media icons for Facebook, YouTube, and Twitter are present, along with a 'Donate' button. The main content area is dominated by a large red banner for 'WomenHeart @ Work' with the text 'Schedule a free workplace presentation' and a video player. To the right of the banner is a call to action: 'Are you one of the 42 million women in the US living with heart disease? WomenHeart is here for you. Join us today and get the support you deserve!' with buttons for 'Join Now', 'Donate', and 'Get Support'. Below the banner, there are three columns: a news item about Mary McGowan being named C.E.O., a 'Latest News' section with two items dated 11/25/2014 and 11/18/2014, and a 'Calendar' section with dates 2/18/2015 and 2/19/2015.

ADDRESS:

1100 17th Street, NW
Suite 500
Washington, DC 20036

CONTACT INFO:

Phone: (202) 728-7199
E-mail: mail@womenheart.org

WomenHeart: The National Coalition for Women with Heart Disease was founded by 3 women who experienced many obstacles following their heart attacks. Realizing the need for more information and services for women with heart disease, they established WomenHeart. WomenHeart's mission is to improve the health and quality of life of women living with, or at risk of, heart disease, and to advocate for their benefit. Women with heart failure can connect with "heart sisters" through one of WomenHeart's patient support services.

Resource Checklist

- ✓ Information on heart failure
- ✓ Peer-to-peer support
- ✓ Cardiology specialist locator
- ✓ Healthy recipes
- ✓ Additional resources
- ✓ News

CardioSmart-American College of Cardiology—Health Care Costs Support

www.cardiosmart.org/Drugs-and-Treatments/Drug-Costs-Support



ADDRESS:
2400 N Street NW
Washington, DC 20037

CONTACT INFO:
Phone: 1-800-253-4636
E-mail: resource@acc.org

The mission of the American College of Cardiology (ACC) is to transform cardiovascular care and improve heart health. The ACC’s CardioSmart website is a patient education and empowerment initiative that aims to help individuals prevent, treat, and manage cardiovascular disease. The “Health Care Costs Support” section of the CardioSmart site provides information on patient assistance programs, low-cost health insurance, and tips to managing the financial demand of heart failure.

Resource Checklist

- ✓ Information on heart failure
- ✓ Prescription assistance programs
- ✓ Health insurance locator
- ✓ Tips to managing finances

Partnership for Prescription Assistance

www.pparx.org

The screenshot shows the website's header with the PPA logo and '9TH ANNIVERSARY' text. A navigation bar includes 'ABOUT US', 'PRESCRIPTION ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS', and 'NEWS & MEDIA'. A prominent 'IMPORTANT NOTICE' banner warns about scam artists. The main content area features a testimonial from a man, a 'GET HELP NOW' button, and a sidebar with 'IMPORTANT INFORMATION for HIV/AIDS Patients' and a link to 'GO'. A footer section titled 'What is the Partnership for Prescription Assistance?' explains the organization's mission.

CONTACT INFO:

E-mail: Online

The Partnership for Prescription Assistance (PPA) helps qualifying patients without prescription drug coverage receive the medicines they need for free or at a reduced cost. The organization's mission is to increase awareness of patient assistance programs and boost enrollment of those who are eligible. The PPA serves as a single point of access to more than 475 public and private programs, including nearly 200 offered by biopharmaceutical companies.

Resource Checklist

- ✓ Prescription coverage programs
- ✓ Co-pay assistance
- ✓ Medical supply assistance

Patient Advocate Foundation

www.patientadvocate.org

PAF Patient Advocate Foundation
Solving Insurance and Healthcare Access Problems | since 1996

Home :: Site Map :: Privacy Policy

HAVE A QUESTION?
Professional Case Managers are standing by to help.
[Email](#)

DONATE | [Get Help](#) | [Healthcare Reform](#) | [Resources](#) | [Events](#) | [Meet PAF](#) | [En Espanol](#)

Help Us Reach Our Goal of Supporting Our Millionth Patient with Direct Case Management Services

get involved now
Learn More

Participate in our Legacy Campaign

TRY TO STOP ONE HEART FROM BREAKING

We are here for you
Helping educate you about your insurance options
Taking the confusion out of complex enrollment forms
Finding financial help for medication co-pays
Taking the questions out of the disability process
Identifying care options for the uninsured

Patient Services
The Process is Simple. Patient Advocate Foundation's Patient Services provides patients with arbitration, mediation and negotiation to settle issues with access to care, medical debt, and job retention related to their illness. Select one of the following to learn more about how PAF Patient Services may assist you:

[View Resource](#)

Educate
Knowledge is Power. Select from the following topics for direct access to helpful resources utilized by our case managers when resolving issues:

[View Resource](#)
[Click here to submit a resource](#)

News
NEW CEO POST ◀
Dealing with insurance denials is a critical part of removing barriers to care.
01.08.2015 ◀
PAF Launches New Co-Pay Assistance for Hepatitis B Patients
01.07.2015 ◀
PAF Congratulates Founder & Former CEO Nancy Davenport-Ennis on Retirement

Facebook

ADDRESS:

421 Butler Farm Road
Hampton, VA 23666

CONTACT INFO:

Phone: 1-800-532-5274

E-mail: help@patientadvocate.org

Patient Advocate Foundation (PAF) offers assistance to patients who receive a diagnosis of a life-threatening or debilitating disease. PAF case managers assist patients with issues specific to insurance, an employer, or a creditor, regarding health coverage, job retention, and debt crisis matters.

Resource Checklist

- ✓ Downloadable resources
- ✓ Resource directories
- ✓ Clinical trials information
- ✓ Information for uninsured patients
- ✓ Co-pay assistance
- ✓ Webinars
- ✓ Online assistance
- ✓ Toll-free helpline

PATIENT EDUCATION RESOURCES

Website	Address	Contact
American Heart Association—Heart Failure www.heart.org/HEARTORG/Conditions/HeartFailure/Heart-Failure_UCM_002019_SubHomePage.jsp	American Heart Association 7272 Greenville Avenue Dallas, TX 75231	Phone: 1-800-242-8721 E-mail: Online
CardioSmart-American College of Cardiology—Heart Failure www.cardiosmart.org/Heart-Conditions/Heart-Failure	American College of Cardiology 2400 N Street NW Washington, DC 20037	Phone: 1-800-253-4636 E-mail: resource@acc.org
HeartFailure.org www.heartfailure.org		E-mail: Online
Heartfailurematters.org www.heartfailurematters.org	European Society of Cardiology The European Heart House 2035 Route des Colles BP 179-Les Templiers F-06903 Sophia Antipolis France	E-mail: hfmatters@escardio.org
Mayo Clinic—Heart Failure www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/heart-failure/basics/definition/con-20029801	Mayo Clinic 200 First Street SW Rochester, MN 55905	Phone: (507) 284-2511 E-mail: Online
National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute—Heart Failure www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/health-topics/topics/hf	NHLBI Health Information Center PO Box 30105 Bethesda, MD 20824	Phone: (301) 592-8573 E-mail: nhlbiinfo@nhlbi.nih.gov
The Educated Patient® www.TheEducatedPatient.com	666 Plainsboro Road Suite 300 Plainsboro, NJ 08536	Phone: (609) 716-7777 E-mail: info@TheEducatedPatient.com

SUPPORT GROUP RESOURCES

Website	Address	Contact
DailyStrength—Heart Failure Support Group www.dailystrength.org/c/Heart-Failure/support-group	DailyStrength 3280 Peachtree Road, Suite 600 Atlanta, GA 30305	E-mail: Online
Inspire www.inspire.com	Inspire 66 Witherspoon Street, Suite 402 Princeton, NJ 08540	Phone: 1-800-945-0381 E-mail: team@inspire.com
Mended Hearts http://mendedhearts.org	The Mended Hearts, Inc 8150 N Central Expressway, M2248 Dallas, TX 75206	Phone: 1-888-HEART99 E-mail: info@mendedhearts.org
WomenHeart: The National Coalition for Women with Heart Disease www.womenheart.org	WomenHeart 1100 17th Street, NW, Suite 500 Washington, DC 20036	Phone: (202) 728-7199 E-mail: mail@womenheart.org

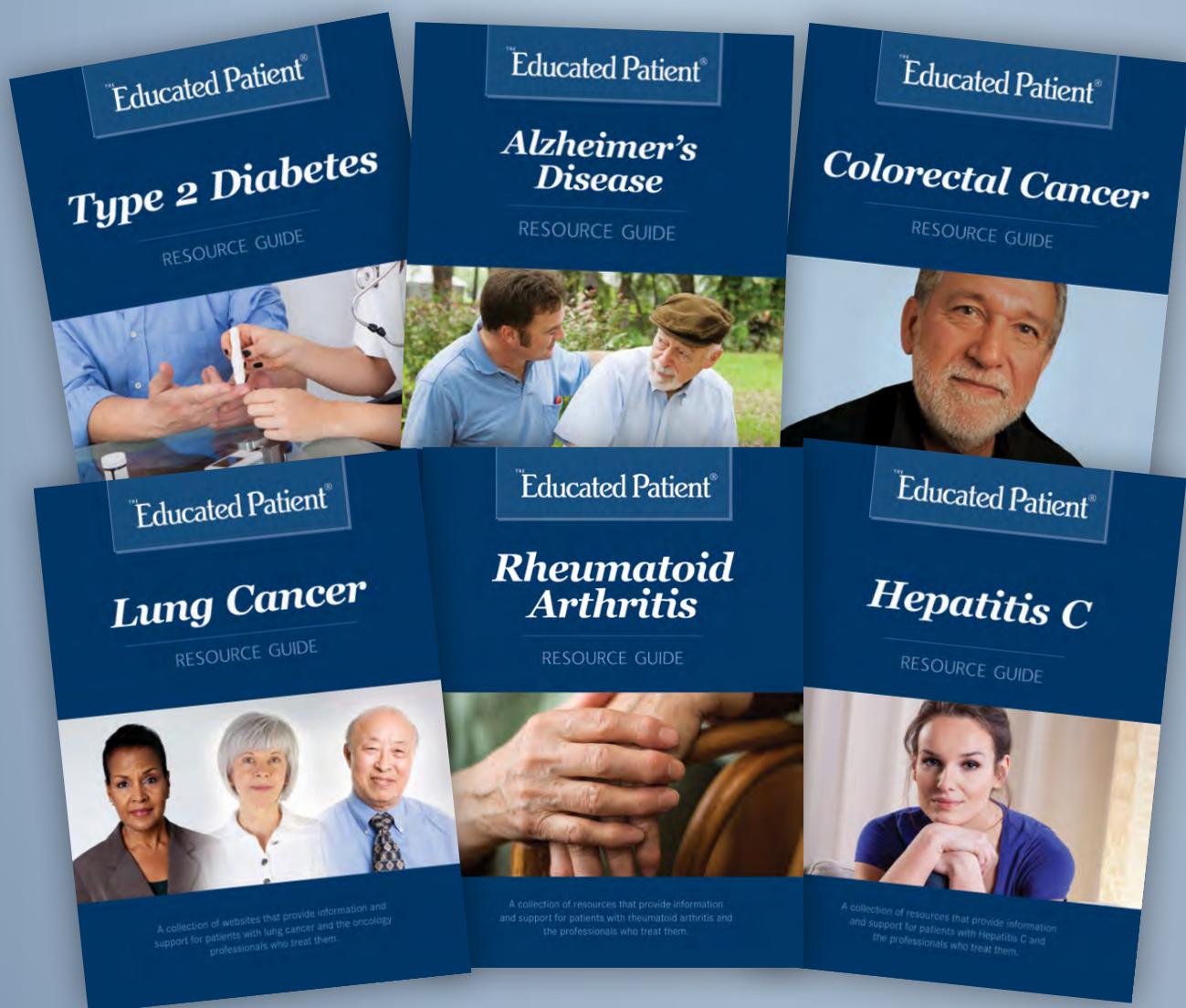
FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE RESOURCES

Website	Address	Contact
CardioSmart—American College of Cardiology—Health Care Costs Support www.cardiosmart.org/Drugs-and-Treatments/Drug-Costs-Support	American College of Cardiology 2400 N Street NW Washington, DC 20037	Phone: 1-800-253-4636 E-mail: resource@acc.org
Partnership for Prescription Assistance www.pparx.org		E-mail: Online
Patient Advocate Foundation www.patientadvocate.org	Patient Advocate Foundation 421 Butler Farm Road Hampton, VA 23666	Phone: 1-800-532-5274 E-mail: help@patientadvocate.org

THE Educated Patient®

RESOURCE GUIDES

A library of guides that provide information and support to patients and the professionals who treat them.



www.TheEducatedPatient.com

