



# Black Adults Living with Heart Failure



## Get the Care You Need

If you've been living with heart failure for a while, you probably know that it can cause serious problems. It's also likely to get worse over time.

**The good news is that you can take steps to advocate for yourself and make sure you're getting the treatment you need to be as healthy as possible.**

## Advocate for Yourself

**Learn about your treatment options.** There's no cure for heart failure, but you can manage it with lifestyle changes and different types of medicines that can help your heart pump blood. Treatment can also include medical devices and therapies that help the heart beat regularly, like:

- **Implantable cardioverter defibrillators (ICDs)** — which help bring your heartbeat back to normal if it gets dangerously fast
- **Cardiac resynchronization therapy-defibrillators (CRT-Ds)** — which help both sides of your heart beat at the same time and can bring your heartbeat back to normal if it gets dangerously fast

If you have advanced heart failure and no treatments are working for you, you may need a heart transplant.



### **Black adults and heart failure**

Black adults ages 35 to 64 are about 3 times more likely than white adults in this age group to die of heart failure.<sup>1</sup> But Black adults living with heart failure are less likely to get appropriate care and treatment than white adults living with heart failure. This may be due in part to bias in the healthcare system — like if a doctor assumes that someone can't afford a certain treatment or won't follow a treatment plan.

<sup>1</sup> [ahajournals.org/doi/10.1161/CIR.0000000000000950](https://doi.org/10.1161/CIR.0000000000000950)

**Ask your doctor questions to help make sure you're getting the care you need.** For example:

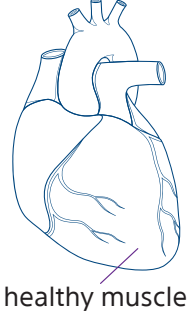
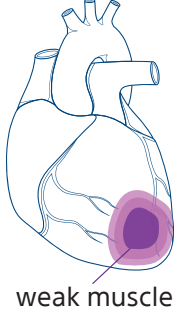
- Why do you recommend my current treatment plan?
- Are there other medicines, diets, or activities that might help me?
- Can you tell me about CRT-D? Is that an option for me?
- What about an ICD?
- Am I eligible for a clinical trial?

**Keep up with your medical appointments.** But keep in mind that you have the right to get care from a doctor you trust – someone who listens to your opinions and answers all of your questions.

If you're feeling unsure about your care, ask for a second opinion from another doctor.

**Bring a family member or friend with you to your medical appointments.** They can offer emotional support, help you ask questions, and take notes.

**Ask your doctor to recommend a support group for people with heart conditions.** You might find it helpful to talk with other people who are experiencing the same things as you.

Healthy Heart	Heart Failure
 <p>healthy muscle</p>	 <p>weak muscle</p>

Heart failure is when your heart can't pump enough blood to the rest of your body. This often happens because your heart muscle is weak.

