



# Women 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.

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**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.**

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## 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:

- **Pacemakers** — which help speed up a slow heartbeat so that it's at a regular speed
- **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.



### Women and heart failure

In 2018, more than half of heart failure deaths in the United States were in women.<sup>1</sup> But women living with heart failure are less likely than men to get appropriate care and treatment.

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<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 takes your symptoms seriously, listens to your opinions, and answers all of your questions.

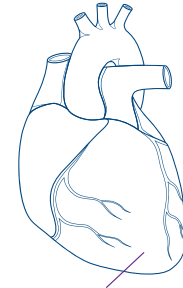
If you're feeling unsure about your care, ask for a second opinion from another doctor.

**Make your own health a priority.** Women often serve in a caregiving role. But it's important to take care of yourself, too — for example, by calling your doctor if you have a new symptom or something doesn't feel right.

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

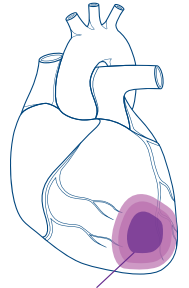
**Ask your doctor to recommend a support group for people with heart conditions.** You might find it helpful to talk with other people who are experiencing the same things as you.

Healthy Heart



healthy muscle

Heart Failure



weak muscle

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.

