

# STAGES OF HEART FAILURE

The stages of heart failure were developed by the American Heart Association (AHA) and American College of Cardiology (ACC) to help patients better understand their diagnosis and what to expect over time.

STAGE	DEFINITION OF STAGE	COMMON TREATMENTS
<b>A</b>	<p>Risk of developing heart failure is high, although there is no evidence of heart dysfunction. Risk factors include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High blood pressure</li> <li>• Diabetes</li> <li>• Coronary artery disease</li> <li>• Metabolic syndrome</li> <li>• History of cardiotoxic drug therapy</li> <li>• History of alcohol abuse</li> <li>• History of rheumatic fever</li> <li>• Family history of cardiomyopathy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exercise regularly</li> <li>• Quit smoking</li> <li>• Treat hypertension</li> <li>• Treat lipid problems</li> <li>• Discontinue alcohol or illegal drug use</li> <li>• An angiotensin converting enzyme inhibitor (ACE inhibitor) or an angiotensin II receptor blocker (ARB) is prescribed if history of coronary artery disease, diabetes, high blood pressure or other vascular or cardiac conditions</li> <li>• Beta blockers may be prescribed to those with a history of heart attacks</li> </ul>
<b>B</b>	<p>Evidence of heart dysfunction but no symptoms of heart failure. This includes individuals with a history of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prior heart attack</li> <li>• Valve disease</li> <li>• Cardiomyopathy</li> </ul> <p>Diagnosis is usually made when an ejection fraction of less than 50 percent is found during an echocardiogram test.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All Stage A treatment options apply</li> <li>• All patients should take an angiotensin converting enzyme inhibitor (ACE inhibitors) or angiotensin II receptor blocker (ARB)</li> <li>• Beta blockers and an aldosterone inhibitor should be prescribed for patients after a heart attack</li> <li>• Surgery options for coronary artery repair and valve repair or replacement should be discussed</li> </ul> <p>If appropriate, surgery options should be discussed for patients who have had a heart attack</p>
<b>C</b>	<p>Evidence of heart dysfunction and symptoms of heart failure. Most common symptoms include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shortness of breath</li> <li>• Fatigue</li> <li>• Reduced ability to exercise</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All Stage A and B treatments apply</li> <li>• All patients should take an angiotensin converting enzyme inhibitor (ACE inhibitors) and beta blockers</li> <li>• African-American patients may be prescribed a hydralazine/nitrate combination if symptoms persist</li> <li>• Diuretics (water pills) and digoxin may be prescribed if symptoms persist</li> <li>• An aldosterone inhibitor may be prescribed when symptoms remain severe even with other therapies</li> <li>• Restrict dietary sodium (salt)</li> <li>• Monitor weight</li> <li>• Restrict fluids (as appropriate)</li> <li>• Discontinue medications that worsen the condition</li> <li>• Cardiac resynchronization therapy (biventricular pacemaker) may be recommended</li> <li>• An implantable cardiac defibrillator (ICD) may be recommended</li> </ul>
<b>D</b>	<p>Continued heart failure even after receiving optimum medical care.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All Stage A, B and C treatments apply</li> <li>• Patient should be evaluated to determine if the following treatments are viable options: heart transplant, ventricular assist devices, aquapheresis, certain surgical procedures, research therapies, continuous infusion of intravenous inotropic drugs or end-of-life (palliative or hospice) care.</li> </ul>

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

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