



**LET'S TALK ABOUT YOUR  
HEART HEALTH**

## Patient-Pharmacist Conversation Record

---

This document is a summary of the conversation you had with your pharmacist. It will allow you to review important information provided by your pharmacist about your level of risk of developing heart failure or your risk of worsening symptoms if you have already been diagnosed with HF. It can also be used to support a conversation with your doctor about your health.

These materials were commissioned and funded by AstraZeneca. AstraZeneca have provided an educational grant to FIP to raise awareness and dissemination of this toolkit in line with FIPs mission to advance pharmacy worldwide.

This material is intended for pharmacists with an interest in cardiovascular disease.

# What is Heart Failure (HF)?

It is more than a disease of the heart.



HF is a condition that occurs when your heart is unable to pump blood effectively to reach all parts of your body, leading to symptoms such as shortness of breath (SOB), fatigue, and swelling in the ankles, legs, and feet.<sup>1-3</sup>

However, HF is much more than a heart problem. It is associated with various other conditions, including diabetes, high blood pressure (hypertension), chronic kidney disease (CKD), and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD). HF and other diseases may have the same risk factors, or one disease may increase the risk or severity of the other.<sup>4-7</sup>

In addition, people with HF may experience new or worsening symptoms quickly, which may also be referred to as “sudden heart failure” or “acute heart failure”.<sup>8,9</sup> Sudden or acute HF is when fluid builds up in your lungs and your symptoms get worse. By keeping track of changes in your condition and avoiding triggers, you can help prevent and control your symptoms.<sup>8</sup>

## For patients who may be at risk of developing HF

### Why am I at risk of developing HF?

You may be at risk of developing HF due to a combination of various risk factors.<sup>6</sup> Understanding these risk factors can help you and your doctor take proactive steps to manage your heart health and reduce the risk of HF.

This leaflet has been shared with you because your pharmacist thinks you may benefit from a conversation with your doctor about your potential risk.

You may be at risk of developing HF if you have one or more of the following<sup>3,6,7</sup>:

*The patient and pharmacist work together to complete* 

- High blood pressure (hypertension)
- Diabetes
- Previous diagnosis of other heart-related conditions (eg, ischaemic heart disease, cardiomyopathy)
- Previous heart attack
- Irregular heartbeat
- Sleep apnoea
- Overweight or obese
- Smoking
- Excessive use of alcohol or drugs

Staff name:

Date:

Other:

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

Comments:

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

## For patients who have been diagnosed with HF

### Why am I at risk of worsening HF symptoms?

There are several factors that can lead to worsening HF symptoms. But people with your health do not always recognise their own symptoms and often view daily changes in symptoms as normal or ignore their symptoms long enough for them to become severe.<sup>10</sup>

This leaflet is being shared with you to support a conversation with your doctor about your health. An initial assessment by your pharmacist has indicated that you may be at risk of declining health due to HF. Your pharmacist can help you document the factors that may put you at risk of worsening HF.

**You may be at risk of new or worsening symptoms of HF if you have one or more of the following<sup>7,11,12</sup>:**

*The patient and pharmacist work together to complete*



- High blood pressure (hypertension)
- Diabetes
- Infection
- Irregular heartbeat
- Worsening of other associated conditions (eg, chronic kidney disease [CKD])
- Certain medications (eg, nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs [NSAIDs])

Other:

.....

.....

.....

.....

Comments:

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

Staff name:

Date:

## Why is it important to report your symptoms?

The most common symptoms of HF may initially be mild and easily overlooked.<sup>13</sup>

People with HF often become accustomed to changes in their symptoms over time. Consequently, they may not recognise or report when symptoms deviate from their usual day-to-day experiences.<sup>10</sup>

Given that HF can affect more than just the heart, it's crucial to promptly report any symptoms to your pharmacist or doctor as soon as they arise.

## I am a patient who is:

**at risk of developing HF.**  
I have these signs and symptoms<sup>2,13-15</sup>:

**diagnosed with HF.**  
These signs and symptoms are new and/or getting worse<sup>2,13-15</sup>:

*The patient and pharmacist work together to complete* 

- Breathlessness
- Shortness of breath while lying flat that is usually relieved by sitting up, using increased number of pillows, or standing
- Shortness of breath that wakes you up, often after 1 or 2 hours of sleep, and is usually relieved by standing
- Ankle swelling
- Swelling of other parts of the body (eg, legs or abdomen)
- Fatigue or tiredness
- Can't exercise
- Difficulty completing everyday activities
- Coughing at night
- Wheezing
- Bloating feeling
- Feeling full after meals
- Loss of appetite or nausea
- Rapid or irregular heartbeat
- Increased need to urinate at night
- Unintentional weight gain (eg, >2 kg/week)
- Difficulty concentrating or confusion (especially in the elderly)

Staff name:

Date:

Other symptoms:

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

Comments:

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

## Why is it so important to get checked?

It's crucial to detect and treat HF as early as possible. Early detection and proactive management strategies may help ease symptoms, slow the disease's progression, and reduce the risk of serious complications. If left untreated, HF can get worse over time and there is no cure.<sup>1,16</sup>



### HF – Getting diagnosed early

HF is typically diagnosed by using various tests, which may include imaging (such as an echocardiogram), blood tests, and physical examinations.<sup>17</sup> These tests help your doctor assess how well your heart is working and determine the severity of HF.



### HF – Frequent check-ins for a worsening condition

It is essential for people with HF to regularly check in with their doctor or pharmacist if they notice any changes or worsening of symptoms.<sup>18</sup> Frequent check-ins can help you learn how to live well with HF.

# What can you do to reduce your risk of developing HF or worsening HF symptoms?

## What you can do now<sup>3,9,16-18</sup>:



Follow a heart-healthy diet low in sodium, saturated fats, and processed foods



Manage cholesterol levels



Monitor and control blood pressure



Monitor and control blood glucose (sugar) levels



Stay physically active with regular exercise



Manage stress through relaxation techniques, exercise, or support groups



Maintain a healthy weight



Weigh yourself daily to check for sudden weight gain



Stop smoking and avoid or limit alcohol



Report any new or worsening symptoms as soon as possible



Learn more about your condition  
Visit **Heart Failure Matters** at <https://www.heartfailurematters.org/>

## Ask your pharmacist or doctor about the following:



Ways to increase your chances of quitting smoking



Physical activity and healthy eating advice and/or referral



Vaccination (eg, flu, COVID-19, shingles, respiratory syncytial virus [RSV])



How to regularly check your weight to see if fluid is building up in your body



How to properly take your HF medications and why you are using them



Ways to help you to remember to take your medications



Keeping other diseases well managed

## References

1. American Heart Association (AHA). What is heart failure? 2023. Available at: <https://www.heart.org/en/health-topics/heart-failure/what-is-heart-failure>. Accessed August 2024.
2. Bozkurt B et al. *Eur J Heart Fail*. 2021;23:352-380.
3. American Heart Association (AHA). What is heart failure? 2022. Available at: <https://www.heart.org/-/media/Files/Health-Topics/Answers-by-Heart/What-Is-Heart-Failure.pdf>. Accessed August 2024.
4. Lawson CA et al. *Circulation: Heart Failure*. 2020;13(2):e006472.
5. Khalid K et al. *Cureus*. 2021;13(8):e17387.
6. American Heart Association (AHA). Risks for heart failure. Available at: <https://www.heart.org/en/health-topics/heart-failure/causes-and-risks-for-heart-failure>. Accessed August 2024.
7. McDonagh TA et al. *Eur Heart J*. 2021;42(36):3599-3726.
8. Alberta Health Services. Avoiding triggers for sudden heart failure. Available at: <https://myhealth.alberta.ca/health/AfterCareInformation/pages/conditions.aspx?hwid=abo3675>. Accessed August 2024.
9. National Health Service (NHS). Heart failure. Available at: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/heart-failure/>. Accessed August 2024.
10. Alpert CM et al. *Heart Fail Rev*. 2017;22(1):25-39.
11. Warren A, Kenny C, Murphy K. The Pharmaceutical Journal. How to support patients being treated for chronic heart failure. Available at: <https://pharmaceutical-journal.com/article/ld/how-to-support-patients-being-treated-for-chronic-heart-failure>. Accessed August 2024.
12. Ryan DK, Banerjee D, Jouhra F. *Eur Cardiol*. 2022;17:e17.
13. Heart Failure Society of America (HFSA). Heart failure facts & information: What are the common symptoms of heart failure? Available at: <https://hfsa.org/patient-hub/heart-failure-facts-information>. Accessed August 2024.
14. Suni E, Wells A. Sleep Foundation. Orthopnea: causes, symptoms, and management. Available at: <https://www.sleepfoundation.org/sleep-apnea/orthopnea>. Accessed August 2024.
15. American Heart Association (AHA). Heart failure signs and symptoms. Available at: <https://www.heart.org/en/health-topics/heart-failure/warning-signs-of-heart-failure>. Accessed August 2024.
16. British Heart Foundation (BHF). Heart failure. Available at: <https://www.bhf.org.uk/information-support/conditions/heart-failure>. Accessed August 2024.
17. American Heart Association (AHA). Common tests for heart failure. Available at: <https://www.heart.org/en/health-topics/heart-failure/diagnosing-heart-failure/common-tests-for-heart-failure>. Accessed August 2024.
18. American Heart Association (AHA). Lifestyle changes for heart failure. Available at: <https://www.heart.org/en/health-topics/heart-failure/treatment-options-for-heart-failure/lifestyle-changes-for-heart-failure>. Accessed August 2024.
19. European Society of Cardiology (ESC). Heart Failure Matters. What you can do. Available at: <https://www.heartfailurematters.org/what-you-can-do/>. Accessed August 2024.

Supported by



Z4-66270 08/24



These materials were commissioned and funded by AstraZeneca. AstraZeneca have provided an educational grant to FIP to raise awareness and dissemination of this toolkit in line with FIPs mission to advance pharmacy worldwide.

This material is intended for pharmacists with an interest in cardiovascular disease.