Heart Failure

What is Heart Failure?

Heart failure is a progressive, debilitating disease characterized by a deterioration of heart function and supply of blood to critical organs.1

Heart failure can be chronic (ongoing) or result in a sudden worsening of symptoms, known as acute decompensated heart failure.2

Causes of Heart Failure

Heart failure often develops following other conditions that have impacted the heart, reducing its ability to function properly. Some causes of heart failure might include:3,4

- Coronary artery disease and heart attack
- Faulty heart valves
- High blood pressure
- Myocarditis (inflammation of the heart muscle)
- Genetic diseases such as hypertrophic cardiomyopathy (thickening of the heart chamber walls)
- Heart transplant
- Medical devices such as ventricular assist devices
- Surgical procedures such as a heart valve replacement or bypass surgery
- Medications such as ACE inhibitors, beta blockers or diuretics

Some treatment options might include:14

- December 2020

Signs and symptoms of heart failure can include:5,6

- Dyspnea (shortness of breath)
- Edema (swelling)/excess fluid in body tissues
- Persistent coughing or wheezing
- Fatigue
- Nausea
- Frequent or lack of appetite
- Confusion or impaired thinking
- Irritability or irregular heart rate

There is no one test that can diagnose heart failure. In addition to tests, physicians consider family history, signs and symptoms, and a physical exam to diagnose the disease. Tests that can help aid in a diagnosis include:8,9

- Chest x-ray
- Electrocardiogram (EKG)
- Echocardiography
- Blood test
- Exercise stress test

Heart failure is a serious condition that can have a significant impact on lives:10

- Approximately 26 million people worldwide have been diagnosed with heart failure.6
- Heart failure is most common in people who are 65 or older.11
- ~50% of all heart failure patients will die within five years of diagnosis.12
- ~50% of U.S. patients with diagnosed heart failure are re-hospitalized within six months.13
- ~10% of heart failure patients in the U.S. are at risk for advanced heart failure and require advanced therapies (e.g., transplants, defibrillators, continuous IV medications or assist devices)12,13
- If not treated properly, heart failure can result in serious complications, including kidney damage or failure, heart valve problems, arrhythmias or liver damage.14

Heart failure is a complex disease and might require different treatment options based on a patient’s unique disease profile. Some treatment options might include:16

- Medications such as ACE inhibitors, beta blockers or diuretics
- Surgical procedures such as a heart valve replacement or bypass surgery
- Medical devices such as ventricular assist devices
- Heart transplant

Bristol Myers Squibb is committed to researching and pursuing new treatment options to help deliver transformational medicines for patients with heart failure and other cardiovascular diseases.