

How is heart failure diagnosed?

The sooner heart failure is diagnosed, the better. Early diagnosis lets you and your care team make lifestyle changes and use treatments to make your quality of life better and reduce the risk of life-threatening complications.

What can I expect as my care team finds out if I have heart failure?

Your care team cannot just use signs and symptoms on their own to diagnose heart failure. The team also needs to check if your heart's structure or function is abnormal. Your care team can use several tests to check how well your heart works and to look for the causes of your heart failure.

These tests may include a complete blood count, analysis of your urine sample, analysis of your salts and minerals, your lipid profile, a liver blood test, your iron levels or thyroid-stimulating hormone (TSH) levels.

In addition to laboratory tests, you may expect to do the following tests to diagnose or manage your heart failure:

NATRIURETIC PEPTIDES: A laboratory test used, in many but not all countries, measures levels of a small proteins known as B-type natriuretic peptide (BNP) or N-terminal pro-B-type natriuretic peptide (NT-proBNP). The release of these proteins is influenced by changes in the pressure or volume of blood in the heart, so measuring their levels can help find out if you have heart failure. However, obesity or kidney disease, can affect your natriuretic peptide levels, so on its own, measuring natriuretic peptides does not diagnose heart failure.

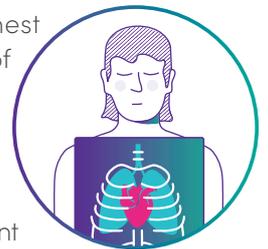
ELECTROCARDIOGRAM (ECG): Although ECGs do not diagnose heart failure they can help provide information about the underlying causes and progression of your heart failure such as irregular heart rhythms.

ECHOCARDIOGRAM: An echocardiograms allow the care team to check how well your heart is working, such as by measuring the ejection fraction.

Echocardiograms also show details such as the size and shape of the heart chambers, whether the heart muscles are moving properly and if the valves are thick or leaky.



CHEST X-RAY: You may have a chest x-ray. This helps find other causes of breathlessness such as lung disease. X-rays can find symptoms that point to a diagnosis of heart failure, such as fluid in the lungs (pulmonary congestion) or abnormal enlargement of the heart (cardiomegaly).



OTHER TYPES OF IMAGING: Your care team may suggest some other imaging tests, such as cardiovascular magnetic resonance (CMR) imaging, single-photon emission computerised tomography (SPECT) or cardiac computed tomography. These provide more information than echocardiograms. If you need one of these tests your care team will talk with you about the reasons, risks and benefits.

**Scan the QR code
to read the Guide**

