

Treatment for heart failure with devices and surgery

If your medicines are not controlling your symptoms well enough, or you have additional issues such as arrhythmias; or your heart failure continues to get worse, your care team may suggest several devices or surgical operations.

Any operation has risks, which may be higher in people with heart failure. Before any operation you should always talk about the risks and benefits with your care team. For example, you should ask are there any driving restrictions and when the device may be deactivated or removed.

See below for a table which summarises main devices and operations used to treat heart failure.

PROCEDURE	WHAT THE PROCEDURE DOES
Implantable cardioverter defibrillator (ICD)	Corrects potentially lethal irregular heartbeats in the ventricles and treats slow heart rate (bradycardia)
Cardiac resynchronisation therapy (also called bi-ventricular pacing)	In some people with heart failure the ventricles do not pump in time with each other. A special pacemaker can co-ordinate the heart's pumping action and it may have a defibrillator
Percutaneous valvular intervention	Many people with heart failure have thick or leaky valves. In some cases, the valve can be replaced or repaired by percutaneous mitral valve repair, a type of key hole surgery. Some valves can be repaired by placing small catheters (thin, flexible tubes) in the artery at the top of the leg. A cardiologist can place a clip on the mitral valve. Some valves need to be replaced with tissue or mechanical heart valve replacements. Mechanical valves require lifelong treatment with warfarin to prevent blood clots
Surgical revascularisation	Revascularisation widens narrowed parts of a coronary artery. Coronary artery bypass grafting (CABG) uses a vein or artery from another part of the body to bypass the blockage. Percutaneous coronary intervention (PCI) uses a metal mesh (stent) to open the vessel
Transplantation	A healthy heart from a donor who recently died replaces a damaged or failing heart. Used in advanced heart failure that still causes severe and persistent symptoms despite medicines and other devices. Each country has clear criteria about who is eligible for a heart transplant

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