



BRITISH COLUMBIA

Ministry of Health Services

# Resources for People with Heart Failure

A GUIDE FOR PATIENTS

May 2003



British Columbia Medical Association

## Heart and Stroke Foundation of BC and Yukon

The Heart and Stroke Foundation of BC and Yukon provides information regarding heart disease education and advocacy. HSF branches do not offer direct health care, but rather they offer information and various care management strategies.

B.C./Yukon Division Office  
1212 West Broadway  
Vancouver, B.C. V6H 3V2  
Telephone: 604 736-4404  
Toll-Free: 1 888 473-4636  
Fax: 604 736-8732  
Web site: <http://www.bc.heartandstroke.ca/>

## Local Community Health Services/Rehabilitation Support

There are a number of other health professionals who may assist you. Whenever possible, develop a consistent relationship with each:

- Community Health Nurses
- Nutritionists
- Pharmacists
- Cardiologist/Geriatician /Other internist
- Palliative Care Teams
- Healthy heart programs
- Support groups
- Cardiac rehabilitation centres
- Cardiac Nurse Specialists

## Ministry of Health Chronic Disease Management

Patient information for heart failure

Web site:  
<http://www.healthservices.gov.bc.ca/cdm/patients/chf/index.html>

## Heart Function Clinics

- Penticton  
Tom Ashton ..... 250 492-4000
- Fraser Health (Burnaby Hospital)  
Brian McGowan ..... 604 412-6109
- Fraser Health (Surrey Memorial Hospital)  
Stephen Pearce ..... 604 588-3003
- Vancouver (St Pauls Hospital)  
Andrew Ignaszewski ..... 604 806-8733

The Canadian network of Heart Failure Clinics maintains an excellent website which includes a video explaining heart failure. Log on to: <http://www.cchfcn.org/nonmembers/english/index.htm>

## The Healthy Heart Society

The Society is involved in building the capacity of communities to develop and maintain healthy heart programs. It maintains a web site with a list of cardiac rehabilitation programs throughout the province.

Suite 402, 1212 West Broadway  
Vancouver, B.C. V6H 3V2  
Telephone: 604 742-1772  
Fax: 604 742-1773  
Web site: <http://www.heart-health.org/about/hhs.html>

**BC HealthGuide Web site:** <http://www.bchealthguide.org>

**BC HealthGuide NurseLine:** The 24-Hour BC HealthGuide NurseLine puts you in touch with a registered nurse any time, day or night, just by calling one of the following numbers:

- Province-wide toll free: 1 866 215-4700
- Local calling within Lower Mainland: 604 215-4700
- Deaf and hearing-impaired toll-free, province wide: 1 866 TTY-4700

## Common Medications for Heart Failure

### ACE Inhibitors

These are drugs such as ramipril, enalapril, captopril, and lisinopril. They help improve your heart's pumping action and prevent your disease from getting worse. **Angiotensin receptor blockers (ARBs)** have a similar function.

### Beta Blockers

These are drugs such as carvedilol, bisoprolol and metoprolol. They reduce how hard your heart has to work and prevent your disease from getting worse. They also help to prevent and treat irregular heartbeat.

### Diuretics

These are drugs such as furosemide. They work to improve symptoms by relieving fluid overload.

### Aldosterone Antagonists

Drugs such as spironolactone block some of the negative complications and keep potassium levels steady when you are on a diuretic.

### Digoxin

Usually called digoxin or lanoxin. This drug works to help relieve symptoms or control irregular heartbeat.

### Anti-coagulants

Drugs such as aspirin and warfarin are used to prevent heart attack and/or stroke.

**PATIENT REMINDERS**

**Heart Failure**

Heart Failure (HF) is a condition which usually happens over a period of time.

With HF, the heart muscle is weakened and does not pump well.

This can result in poor blood circulation to tissues and organs of the body. Also, blood can “back up” causing symptoms such as:

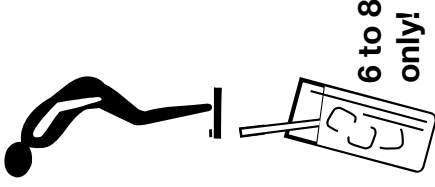
- Shortness of breath
- Swelling of hands and lower legs
- Sensation of bloating
- Irregular heart beat
- Waking at night with sudden shortness of breath
- Trouble breathing when lying flat

**Steps to Help Reduce Symptoms**

1. Weigh yourself daily before breakfast.

Your goal weight is:

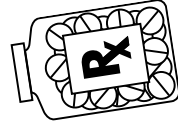
2. Limit fluid intake to 6 to 8 cups per day



3. Avoid high salt foods



4. Don't add extra salt to your food



5. Take your medications as prescribed

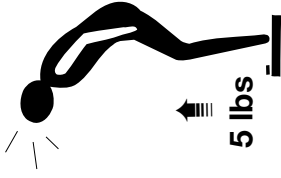
6. Try to get a little exercise each day



7. Avoid alcohol and smoking

**When to Call or Visit Your Doctor**

If you gain 5 lbs (2.5 kg) in a week or 4 lbs (2kg) in 2 days



If you are thinking of changing any of your medications (including non-prescription)

If you notice any of the following:

- Chest pain
- Sudden dizziness or heart palpitations
- Increased fatigue
- Trouble breathing when lying flat
- Increased shortness of breath
- Difficulty breathing at night
- Increased signs of swelling such as swollen ankles, bloating, or clothing feels tight

