

### **Congestive Heart Failure... A Community Report**

To define heart failure simply means that the heart is not pumping blood through the body as well as it should. When a person is diagnosed with congestive heart failure it means that the heart's pumping action weakens, blood backs up into the vessels around the lungs and causes seepage of fluid into the lungs. This is called congestion.

**Signs and Symptoms of Congestive Heart Failure** – This is a serious illness that can effect how you live. Due to the congestion and the extra fluid a person may experience difficulty breathing and/or swelling of the feet and legs.

### **Health Tips for Congestive Heart Failure Patients**

Follow all physician orders – With proper medication, the right dose and careful management you can live a long, productive life.

- Weigh yourself daily
- Avoid high-sodium foods,
- Be able to identify worsening symptoms of heart failure and develop an action plan to follow – worsening symptoms include:
  - Sudden weight gain of three or more pounds in one day, five or more pounds in one week
  - Shortness of breath while at rest or with changes in activity level
  - Increased swelling of the lower limbs
  - Swelling or pain in the abdomen
  - Trouble sleeping
  - Frequent dry, hacking cough, especially at night.
  - Loss of appetite
  - Increased fatigue
- Eliminate smoking – Nicotine increases heart rate and blood pressure and increases work on the heart.
- Moderate physical activity can help the heart work more efficiently. Seek medical approval for the type and amount of activity. Advantages to physical activity are:
  - Less fatigue
  - Less stress
  - Increase energy level
  - Weight control/loss
  - Improved circulation
  - Lower blood pressure and cholesterol levels

**Alliance Community Hospital offers a Cardiac Rehabilitation Program which consists of education and monitored exercise. To discuss this opportunity please call 330-829-8677 for additional information.**

### **Congestive Heart Failure – How Does Alliance Community Hospital Compare?**

At Alliance Community Hospital (ACH) we follow national congestive heart failure treatment guidelines designed to improve the quality of care for all congestive heart failure patients. We monitor the quality of care we provide by tracking specific national treatment guidelines and comparing our statistics to national benchmark standards.

1. The left ventricle is the chamber of the heart that pumps blood out of the heart and into the body. Measuring left ventricular function (LVF) helps determine how well a congestive heart failure patient's left ventricle is working.

National monitoring recommends that hospitals document LV function.

ACH 2008	State (Eastern Ohio)	National Average
97%	95%	97%

2. Proper management of medications is important to improve the quality of life. Congestive heart failure medications include Angiotensin-converting enzyme (ACE) inhibitors, beta blockers, and angiotensin-receptor blockers (ARBs). ACE and ARBs improve the function of the heart and decrease mortality. Beta blockers improve the heart function in as little as three months.

If a patient has a left ventricular dysfunction the National Standards recommend that the patient be given an ACE or an ARB during their hospital stay and after discharge unless it is contraindicated.

ACH 2008	State (Eastern Ohio)	National Average
85%	86%	93%

3. Once diagnosed, a patient with congestive heart failure needs to have explicit instructions to be able to monitor their weight, limit their salt intake, and take their medications regularly.

National congestive heart failure guidelines require that hospitals document discharge instructions for activity level, diet, discharge medications, follow-up appointment, weight monitoring and what to do if symptoms worsen. These instructions need to be recorded in the patient's medical record.

ACH 2008	State (Eastern Ohio)	National Average
79%	74%	83%

4. Smoking damages the lungs and can make it hard to breathe. The lungs of a person in congestive heart failure are compromised due to excess fluid. Smokers who have heart failure can eliminate a major source of stress on their hearts by quitting smoking. Heart failure symptoms will improve with the cessation of smoking. Smokers trying to quit often require support and counseling. ACH offers smokers a smoking cessation program called "Fresh Start" in conjunction with the American Cancer Society and the number to sign up is 330-596-7100.

National congestive heart failure treatment guidelines suggest that all patients who are current smokers be offered smoking cessation guidelines in an attempt to reduce or quit smoking.

ACH 2008	State (Eastern Ohio)	National Average
100%	93%	98%

*Data for ACH and comparative data is obtained by using the Ohio Hospital Association Core Measure Report for 2008.*