

Patient Information **Heart Failure**

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- Heart failure means that the heart isn't pumping as effectively as it should. Heart failure occurs when the heart muscle weakens and is unable to circulate enough blood to meet the body's needs, often causing shortness of breath, fatigue and leg swelling. When fluid builds up, the condition is called congestive heart failure.
- Heart failure usually develops slowly, often as a result of an underlying heart condition, such as coronary artery disease, high blood pressure, damaged heart valves, a congenital heart defect or arrhythmia. Heart failure may also arise as a complication of a heart attack.
- The term "heart failure" makes it sound like the heart is no longer working at all and there's nothing that can be done. Heart failure is a serious condition, but many people with heart failure lead a full, enjoyable life when the condition is managed with medication and healthy lifestyle changes. It's also helpful to have the support of family and friends who understand your condition.

SYMPTOMS

- Shortness of breath
- Fatigue
- Leg swelling

DIAGNOSTIC TESTS

- Ultrasound of the heart (Echocardiogram)

TREATMENT

- Although heart damage is often irreversible, many heart failure treatments can strengthen the heart and improve symptoms.
- Medications like ACE inhibitors and diuretics to treat high blood pressure and congestive heart failure can help patients live longer and more comfortably.
- Those with more severe cases of heart failure may benefit from surgery to repair damaged heart valves or unclog arteries.
- Healthy lifestyle changes

FOR MORE INFORMATION or to make an appointment at URMC Cardiology at Highland Hospital, please call (585) 341-6780 or visit us online at www.highlandheart.urmc.edu