

Classes of Heart Failure

Share 0 Like 160 Share Tweet G+1 24 Share 3.7K Updated: Sep 28, 2016

Doctors usually classify patients' heart failure according to the severity of their symptoms. The table below describes the most commonly used classification system, the New York Heart Association (NYHA) Functional Classification¹. It places patients in one of four categories based on how much they are limited during physical activity.

Class	Patient Symptoms
I	No limitation of physical activity. Ordinary physical activity does not cause undue fatigue, palpitation, dyspnea (shortness of breath).
II	Slight limitation of physical activity. Comfortable at rest. Ordinary physical activity results in fatigue, palpitation, dyspnea (shortness of breath).
III	Marked limitation of physical activity. Comfortable at rest. Less than ordinary activity causes fatigue, palpitation, or dyspnea.
IV	Unable to carry on any physical activity without discomfort. Symptoms of heart failure at rest. If any physical activity is undertaken, discomfort increases.
Class	Objective Assessment
A	No objective evidence of cardiovascular disease. No symptoms and no limitation in ordinary physical activity.
B	Objective evidence of minimal cardiovascular disease. Mild symptoms and slight limitation during ordinary activity. Comfortable at rest.
C	Objective evidence of moderately severe cardiovascular disease. Marked limitation in activity due to symptoms, even during less-than-ordinary activity. Comfortable only at rest.
D	Objective evidence of severe cardiovascular disease. Severe limitations. Experiences symptoms even while at rest.

For Example:

- A patient with minimal or no symptoms but a large pressure gradient across the aortic valve or severe obstruction of the left main coronary artery is classified:
 - **Function Capacity I, Objective Assessment D**
- A patient with severe anginal syndrome but angiographically normal coronary arteries is classified:
 - **Functional Capacity IV, Objective Assessment A**

Heart Failure

• [Home](#)

• [About Heart Failure](#)

Introduction
Types of Heart Failure
[Classes of Heart Failure](#)
Heart Failure in Children
Advanced Heart Failure

• [Causes and Risks for HF](#)

• [Warning Signs and Symptoms](#)

• [Diagnosing HF](#)

• [Treatment Options for HF](#)

• [Living with HF and Advanced HF](#)

• [Tools and Resources](#)

• [Personal Stories](#)

Heart Failure Questions to Ask Your Doctor

Use these [questions](#) to ask your doctor about heart failure.

¹ Adapted from Dolgin M, Association NYH, Fox AC, Gorlin R, Levin RI, New York Heart Association. Criteria Committee. Nomenclature and criteria for diagnosis of diseases of the heart and great vessels. 9th ed. Boston, MA: Lippincott Williams and Wilkins; March 1, 1994. Original source: Criteria Committee, New York Heart Association, Inc. Diseases of the Heart and Blood Vessels. Nomenclature and Criteria for diagnosis, 6th edition Boston, Little, Brown and Co. 1964, p 114.

This content was last reviewed April 2015.

HF Series in Heart Insight Magazine

Big Heart Problem

In the first of a four-part series on heart failure, we investigate what it is, what causes it and what's the prognosis.

The Unrelaxing Heart

The second installment explains heart failure with muscle intact. Queen Latifah and her mom, Rita, share their personal experience with Rita's own heart failure diagnosis.

The Ins and Outs of Hospitalization

Heart failure patients are often hospitalized. This article looks at managing self-care to minimize just how often re-hospitalizations happen.

Shared Decision Making for Advanced HF

When HF progresses to an advanced stage, there are many decisions to be made. Here we delve into the importance of shared decision making.



HF Resources For Life

HF Info Sheets

[What is Heart Failure?](#) | Spanish
[How Can I Live with Heart Failure?](#) | Spanish
[HF and Your Ejection Fraction Explained](#)
[Questions To Ask Your Doctor](#)
[What is Echocardiography?](#)
[What is a Stress Test?](#)

HF Lifestyle Sheets

[Why Should I Limit Sodium?](#)
[How Do I Follow a Healthy Diet?](#) | Spanish
[How Can Physical Activity Become a Way of Life?](#) | Spanish
[How Can I Make My Lifestyle Healthier?](#)
[How Can I Support My Loved One?](#)

Trackers

[Symptoms Tracker](#) | Spanish
[Medication Tracker](#) | Spanish
[Activity Tracker](#)
[Blood Pressure Tracker](#)

[Find additional helpful resources here](#)

Let's
Rise Above
Heart Failure
TOGETHER!

Join our Support Network

Popular Articles

- [Understanding Blood Pressure Readings](#)
- [Sodium and Salt](#)
- [What are the Symptoms of High Blood Pressure?](#)
- [All About Heart Rate \(Pulse\)](#)
- [How to Eat Healthy](#)
- [Heart Attack Symptoms in Women](#)
- [Low Blood Pressure - When Blood Pressure Is Too Low](#)
- [Tachycardia | Fast Heart Rate](#)
- [Warning Signs of a Heart Attack](#)
- [Angina \(Chest Pain\)](#)

About Us

Our mission is to build healthier lives, free of cardiovascular diseases and stroke. That single purpose drives all we do. The need for our work is beyond question. [Find Out More](#)



Our Causes

[Go Red For Women](#)
[Go Red For Tu Corazón](#)
[Healthy Living](#)
[EmPOWERED to Serve](#)

The Warning Signs

Online Communities

[Heart and Stroke Encyclopedia](#)

Volunteer

Our Sites

[American Heart Association](#)
[American Stroke Association](#)
[My Life Check](#)
[Heart360](#)
[Professional Heart Daily](#)
[Scientific Sessions](#)
[Stroke Conference](#)
[You're The Cure](#)
[Global Programs](#)
[SHOP](#)
[eBooks](#)

Contact Us

Address
 7272 Greenville Ave.
 Dallas, TX 75231
Customer Service
 1-800-AHA-USA-1
 1-800-242-8721
 1-888-474-VIVE
Local Info
[RSS](#)

[Healthy Living](#) | [Conditions](#) | [Caregiver](#) | [Professional](#) | [Research](#) | [Educator](#) | [CPR & ECC](#) | [Shop](#) | [Causes](#) | [Advocate](#) | [Giving](#) | [Media](#) | [Volunteer](#) | [Donate](#)
[Privacy Policy](#) | [Copyright](#) | [Ethics Policy](#) | [Conflict of Interest Policy](#) | [Linking Policy](#) | [Diversity](#) | [Careers](#) | [Suppliers & Providers](#) | [Accessibility Statement](#)
 ©2017 American Heart Association, Inc. All rights reserved. Unauthorized use prohibited.
 The American Heart Association is a qualified 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization.

*Red Dress™ DHHS, Go Red™ AHA; National Wear Red Day® is a registered trademark.



This site complies with the HONcode standard for trustworthy health information: [verify here.](#)