

Classes of Heart Failure



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.

Heart Failure

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Understand Your HF
 How serious is my heart failure?
 Mild Moderate Severe
 In what ways does having heart failure increase my health risks?
 How likely is it that having HF will worsen the effects of other conditions I may have?
 Would any of the following lifestyle changes help me to better manage the progress of HF?
 Managing weight
 Eating better
 Quitting smoking
 Making other important changes?

Identify Your HF Needs
 Am I a candidate for HF cardiac rehab?
 Yes No
 Are there any remaining tests we need to do to learn more about my heart function? If so, which ones?
 What are the most important things I can do to manage my HF?
 What should I expect in the coming weeks, months or years?

Explore HF Treatment
 Are there any activities that are off limits for me at this time? (List specific concerns you may have, like exercise, sex, housework.)
 What treatment options should I be thinking about for managing my HF?
 What are my treatment goals at this time?

Heart Failure Questions to Ask Your Doctor

RiseAboveHF.org

Warning Signs of Heart Failure

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- 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.

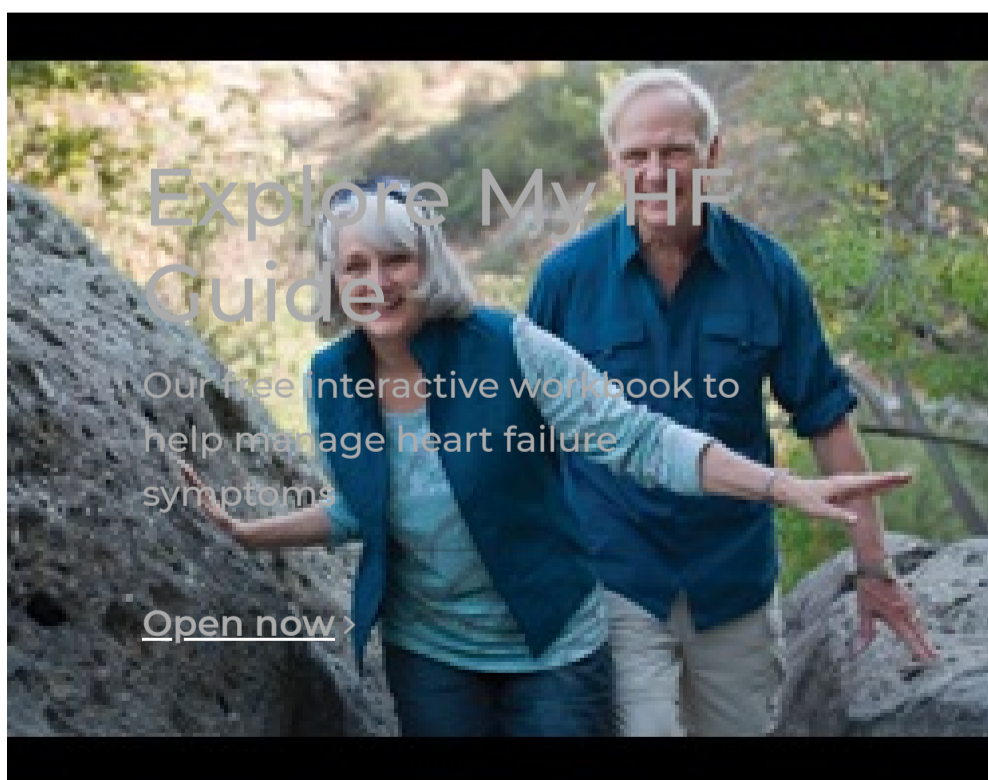
For Example:

- 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**

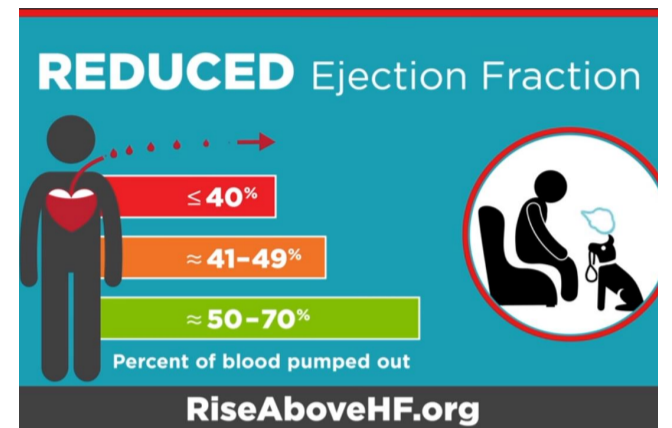
¹ Adapted from Dolgin M, Association NYH, Fox AC, Gorlin R, Levin RI, New York Heart Association. Criteria Committee. Nomenclature and criteria for diagnosis of diseases of the heart and great vessels. 9th ed. Boston, MA: Lippincott Williams and Wilkins; March 1, 1994.

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.

Last Reviewed: May 31, 2017



Medications Used to Treat Heart Failure



Diagnosing Heart Failure