

TAKE CARE OF YOUR HEART!

No matter the lifestyles of a smoker (even if he maintains a good diet, exercises, and had a regular checkups), smoking can definitely diminish the benefits of a healthy lifestyle. What are the symptoms of a heart failure? Symptoms may be mild to severe or none at all.

They can be constant or can come and go. Heart failure symptoms are related to the changes that occur in your heart and body, and the severity depends on how weak your heart is, the best is to have a regular check up, which includes chest x-ray, echocardiogram (ECG), and stress test. The symptoms may include:

1. Congested lungs- a weak causes fluid to back up in the lungs. This can cause shortness of breath with exercise or difficulty in breathing at rest or when lying flat in bed.
2. Fluid and water retention – a weak heart pumps less blood to your kidneys and causes fluid and water retention, resulting in swollen ankles, legs and abdomen called edema. It may also result in weight gain. This can also cause an increased need to urinate during the night as your body attempts to get rid of excess fluid. Bloating in your stomach may cause appetite and nausea.
3. Dizziness, fatigue and weakness. Less Blood to your major organs and muscles makes you feel tired and weak. Less blood to the brain can cause dizziness or confusion
4. Rapid or irregular heartbeat – the heart beats faster to pump enough blood to the body. Heart problems may cause fast or irregular heartbeats.

How you can prevent heart failure worsening:

1. Keep your blood pressure low - in heart failure, the release of hormones causes the blood vessels to constrict or tighten. The heart must work hard to pump blood through the constricted vessels. It is important to keep your blood pressure as low as possible so that your heart can pump effectively without extra stress.
2. Maintain fluid balance - remember the more fluid you carry in your blood vessels, the harder your heart must work.
3. Limit your salt intake.
4. Monitor your weight and lose excess weight.
5. Monitor your symptoms – call your doctor if new symptoms occur or if your symptoms worsen.
6. Take your medications as prescribed.

How to prevent heart damage:

1. Stop Smoking or chewing tobacco.
2. Reach and maintain your healthy weight.
3. Control high blood pressure, cholesterol levels, and diabetes.
4. Exercise regularly.
5. Refrain from drinking alcohol
6. Have surgery and other procedures to treat your heart failure or to discover what caused it.