STATEMENT OF CONFIDENTIALITY
This booklet may contain protected health information. Persons other than you and your health care providers must have your permission to view this booklet.
Understanding Heart Failure

This booklet is designed to help you, your family and caregiver understand your heart condition, heart failure, commonly referred to in the past as congestive heart failure (CHF).

It is important that you, your family/caregivers and your health care providers (doctors, nurses, pharmacist and other health care professionals) work as a team and be involved in managing your condition. By working with your health care team and following a few simple guidelines, you may live longer and improve your quality of life. The more you know about your disease, the more you can be involved in your care and treatment.

For most patients, heart failure is a chronic condition. This means it cannot be cured; however, it is a condition that can be managed and treated. By working with your health care team, you can make the best choices and set your goals so that your life remains interesting and enjoyable.

When you are able to recognize the common early symptoms of your condition, you can keep your doctors and nurses updated on your condition, receive appropriate and timely treatment and help prevent serious complications.

Keep this booklet as a resource for yourself, your family and your caregivers. It contains numerous forms that can be used to write down your weight, vital signs, medicines and other important information.

As the home health nurse instructs you in the information contained in this booklet, please ask questions during their visits or feel free to call our office if something is unclear or with your questions and/or concerns.

We look forward to being a member of your health care team!

The Professional Home Care Staff
Heart Failure Patient Education Guide

Understanding Heart Failure

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Purpose: This booklet is for informational purposes only and is not designed to replace your physician’s advice or treatments. The information contained in this booklet may change, as practice guidelines change.

Disclaimer: We have attempted to make the information contained in this booklet as accurate as possible; however, Medical Forms Management, Inc. makes no guarantees as to its accuracy and assumes no liability for the use of its forms and publications.

Research Resources: Department of Health and Human Services; National Institutes of Health; American Heart Association, Center for Disease Control, Food and Drug Administration

Professional Consultants: Medical Forms Management, Inc. would like to thank the following home health agencies for their time, input, clinical guidance and piloting of the booklet in their companies with home care patients and staff:

American Nursing Care, Milford, OH; HomeCall, Frederick, MD; John Knox Village Home Health Agency, Lee’s Summit, MO; Medical Center HomeCare Services, Johnson City, TN; PHC Home Health Care, Celina, TN; Spartanburg Regional Home Care Services, Spartanburg, SC; Willowbrook Home Health Care, Inc., Nashville, TN

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SECTION I. The Disease Process

So, you have heart failure. You are not alone. An estimated 5.7 million Americans have heart failure, making it a major chronic condition in our country. That number continues to grow as the number of older Americans increase every year. The estimated direct and indirect cost for treating heart failure in the U.S. is $30.7 billion per year.

Heart failure is one of the most common reason for hospitalization in patients 65 years of age and older. One in five of all discharged patients age 65 and older have heart failure listed as their primary or secondary diagnosis.

Reports indicate that heart failure occurs more often in men than women; however, women who are being treated in their 70s and 80s are on the rise. Heart failure is also more common in African Americans; occurs twice as often in people with high blood pressure (hypertension); and five times more often in persons who have had a heart attack (myocardial infarction).

WHAT IS HEART FAILURE?

Just the name “heart failure” sounds frightening. Heart failure does not mean the heart has “failed” or stopped beating. Heart failure means that your heart’s pumping power is weaker than normal and therefore not pumping as well as it should. Heart failure can be right or left sided and usually occurs over a long period of time. The heart enlarges, increases in muscle mass and pumps faster to compensate. Although your heart still beats, a weakened heart pumps too little blood that is rich with oxygen and nutrients to meet the body’s needs. Walking, carrying groceries or climbing steps can be difficult. You may feel short of breath, which means the body is not getting all the oxygen it needs.

CAUSES OF HEART FAILURE

The most common causes of heart failure are listed below:

- Coronary artery disease
- Past heart attack (myocardial infarction)
- Heart muscle disease (cardiomyopathy)
- High blood pressure (hypertension)
- Heart valve disease
- Abnormal heart rhythms (beats too fast, too slow and/or irregular)
- Heart defects from birth
- Diabetes
- Severe anemia
- Overactive thyroid
- Severe lung disease

While it is important to know the actual cause of your heart failure, it is more important to know what can be done to improve your condition since your heart has decreased pumping power.
This file is just a small sample of this booklet

Our Patient Education Series offer:

- A simple solution for the education of individuals and family for common health conditions and issues
- A tool for smooth transitions between care settings
- Documentation tools to track compliance and record information (i.e., medications, appointments, diet)
- Guidance for lifestyle changes and other interventions to help with day-to-day management
- Large print and simplified language enhances readability and comprehension

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