

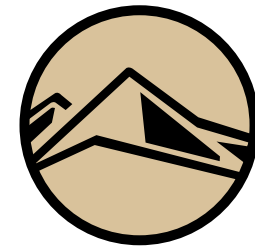
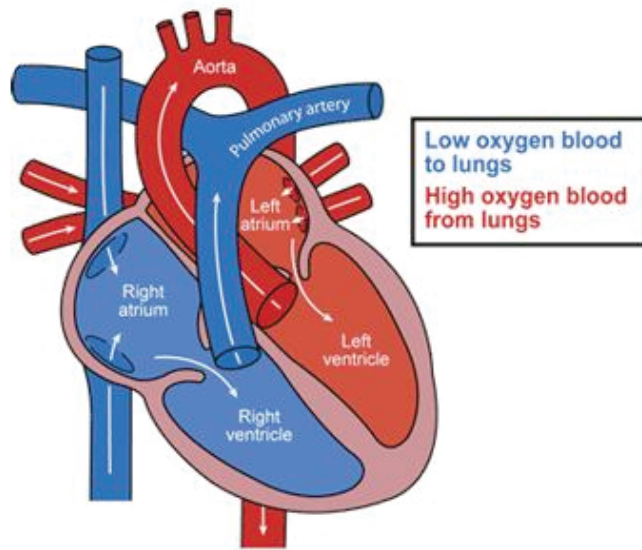
# Heart Failure

## About this topic

Heart failure happens when your heart has trouble pumping the right amount of blood through the body. This means the body will not receive the oxygen it needs to work well. When the heart is not working well, blood can back up into the lungs, neck, belly, and arms. It can also cause swelling in the legs or other parts of the body.

Heart failure is a long-term problem and will get worse over time. Your doctor will work hard to treat your heart failure and to keep you as healthy as possible.

## Normal Heart



**UNION GENERAL  
HOSPITAL, INC.**

*AFFILIATE OF: UNION GENERAL HEALTH SYSTEM*

## What are the causes?

Heart failure is most often caused by coronary artery disease or a heart attack. It may also be caused by problems with the heart's valves. You may have heart failure because you had an infection in your heart muscle. It may be due to high blood pressure or an abnormal heart rhythm. Sleep apnea or high blood sugar may also cause your heart not to work as well as it should. These causes result in a weak or damaged heart muscle. When your heart is weak or damaged, you may have heart failure.

## What can make this more likely to happen?

You are more likely to have heart failure if you are older or are someone who smokes. Black men have more heart failure. Having high blood pressure or being overweight can also raise your chances of having heart failure. So can drinking too much beer, wine, and mixed drinks (alcohol). People with long-term diseases like emphysema or diabetes are more likely to have problems with their heart.