

Heart Failure: Procedures That May Help



You have a condition called heart failure (also known as congestive heart failure, or CHF). Certain procedures may help in some cases of heart failure. They are done to treat health problems that are affecting your heart. These procedures are not the best options for all patients. If any of them can help you, your doctor can give you more details.

Treating Artery and Valve Problems

If you have coronary artery disease or valve disease, procedures may be done to improve blood flow. This helps the heart pump better, which can improve heart failure symptoms:

- Cardiac catheterization helps detect clogged blood vessels. X-ray dye is injected into the heart through a catheter (thin tube). Then, an angiogram (special type of X-ray) is taken of the blood vessels.
- Angioplasty and stenting expand narrowed arteries. These procedures are done during cardiac catheterization.
- Bypass surgery allows blood to flow around a clogged artery.
- Valve surgery repairs or replaces faulty valves so blood can flow properly through the chambers of the heart.

Treating Heart Rhythm Problems

Certain devices may be attached to the heart to regulate a slow or abnormal heart rhythm. This helps take strain off the heart:

- A pacemaker is a small electronic device that treats a slow heartbeat.
- An ICD (implantable cardioverter defibrillator) is a device that treats fast heart rhythms when they become life-threatening.
- Cardiac resynchronization therapy (CRT) is a treatment that stimulates the heart's lower chambers (ventricles) so their contractions are more efficient, pumping more blood with each beat. This therapy is delivered by a pacemaker.

In Severe Cases

For a few people who are very sick, a heart transplant may be an option. A heart transplant is very serious and not an option for all patients. Your doctor can tell you more.