



# Congestive Heart Failure (CHF)

**Richard's 83-year-old father began experiencing fatigue and weakness**, as well as shortness of breath at night after getting into bed. His legs and ankles were often swollen, and his weight began to increase even with his sudden and unusual lack of appetite and feelings of nausea. In addition, he was frequently coughing.

Richard finally persuaded his stubborn dad that it was time to go to the doctor. Tests resulted in a diagnosis that surprised both father and son: congestive heart failure. And the condition was bad enough to force hospitalization. Richard and his father knew about heart attacks. What, they asked, was congestive heart failure?

His cardiologist explained that congestive heart failure occurs when the heart is no longer able to pump blood throughout the body. According to the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada, congestive heart failure is a common condition that may develop after the heart becomes damaged or weakened by heart diseases including heart attacks and other medical conditions. Congestive heart failure happens when the pumping action of your heart is not strong enough to move blood through your body. This pumping action carries oxygen and nutrients, so that your body can function, especially during times of increased activity or stress. Congestive heart failure is a progressive disorder that affects the heart and other organs in your body such as the lungs and the kidneys.\*

The doctor told Richard and his father that aging plays a large role in the risk of congestive heart failure, and the prevalence of heart failure doubles approximately with each decade of life. As people live longer, the occurrence of heart failure rises, as well as other conditions that complicate its treatment.

When Richard's dad was ready to go home after a two-week hospital stay, he was surprised by the number of instructions he received that included medication, at-home exercises, a strict diet, orders for follow-up doctors' visits and other things. Doctors emphasized to Richard's family that congestive heart failure is one of the most common reasons for hospital readmissions. Their objective, of course, was to keep their father out of a hospital or care facility and in his home.

The local Home Instead Senior Care® office stands ready to help a senior loved one, such as Richard's father, who is recovering from congestive heart failure at his home.. Home Instead Senior Care can help a senior transition safely from the hospital or facility through the network's Home Instead Returning Home<sup>SM</sup> Program.

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[http://www.heartandstroke.com/site/c.iKlQLcMWJtE/b.3484065/k.C530/Heart\\_disease\\_\\_Heart\\_failure.htm](http://www.heartandstroke.com/site/c.iKlQLcMWJtE/b.3484065/k.C530/Heart_disease__Heart_failure.htm)

## Returning Home<sup>SM</sup>



## How a Home Instead CAREGiver can help

**Medication Reminders:** Dealing with two medical problems at the same time often calls for multiple prescriptions. A Home Instead CAREGiver can pick up new prescriptions and refills, and oversee medication reminders to help reduce the risk of a medication mishap. A Home Instead CAREGiver also can also make a note of any reactions or side effects so they can be addressed during a doctor's appointment or, if needed, alert the doctor immediately.

**Nutrition Management:** A Home Instead CAREGiver can help with grocery shopping and meal preparation. Eating a reduced-salt diet is important in managing issues such as swelling in the ankles and legs. Preparing meals for a client offers opportunities to interact as well as a chance to observe and record the client's food intake.

**Exercise and Activity:** Congestive Heart Failure patients often will require a daily regime of simple at-home exercises to maintain health. A Home Instead CAREGiver can remind and encourage a client to stay on schedule with their exercises. Light housekeeping and assistance with bathing, dressing and toileting are other services that may be available.

**Excessive Emotional Stress or Depression:** It's not uncommon for a senior loved one to become anxious or depressed after returning from the hospital; in fact, experts link depression and heart disease. A Home Instead CAREGiver's companionship can help with that aspect of Congestive Heart Failure, and a Home Instead CAREGiver can alert family members or the client's doctor if signs of depression appear.

**Keeping Records:** Many senior loved ones will be required to record their weight in a diary every morning. A Home Instead CAREGiver can be instrumental in helping a senior track important measurables.

**Doctor Appointments:** Follow-ups with doctors are often required to ensure that older adults manage their conditions effectively. Trips to a cardiac rehabilitation program often are necessary. A Home Instead CAREGiver can track scheduled appointments, prepare a client for the trip and provide transportation to wherever the senior loved one needs to go.



For more information contact your local  
Home Instead Senior Care® office at  
888.484.5759  
or visit [ReturningHome.com](http://ReturningHome.com)

**Returning Home**<sup>SM</sup>

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