



## UNDERSTANDING AND TREATING CONGESTIVE HEART FAILURE

**Congestive Heart Failure (CHF)**, or "heart failure" (a phrase that implies more hopelessness than is warranted or correct), is a very serious, chronic (long-term) disease in which the heart cannot pump enough blood to sustain its own health or the health of the body's other organs. With **CHF**, the flow of blood leaving the heart is slowed, causing the tissue to swell and making it difficult for the blood that is entering the heart to flow quickly and easily.

**CHF** can be the result of myriad conditions, like coronary artery disease and/or pulmonary arterial disease (fatty deposits or "plaque" build-up that narrows the arteries and restricts blood flow), a past heart attack or other heart disease or infection, high blood pressure, high blood cholesterol, rheumatic fever, or congenital (present at birth) heart defects.

Some of the warning signs of **CHF** are:

- Sudden weight gain (from fluid retention)
- Shortness of breath, especially while lying down or sleeping
- Dry, persistent cough
- Dizziness or fainting
- Swelling of the legs and/or ankles
- Aches, pains, or numbness in the chest, arms, or legs
- Irregular or fast pulse
- General, unexplained fatigue

Early diagnosis of **CHF** is vitally important – any delay will certainly increase the threat posed by this disease. Treatment can include a change of diet, exercise, and general lifestyle, as well as taking medication to ease pain and discomfort and to improve function.

**HeartPlace** wants you to live with the confidence that comes from knowing that you're doing everything possible to maintain and even to improve your health. Don't wait to call your cardiologist. We want to help you by early diagnosis of **Congestive Heart Failure**.