

Diabetes and Heart Failure: What You Need to Know



WHAT IS THE CONNECTION BETWEEN DIABETES AND HEART FAILURE?

Diabetes and heart failure are closely linked. People living with diabetes are more likely to develop heart failure due to the strain high blood sugar levels place on the heart and blood vessels. Over time, diabetes can lead to conditions such as high blood pressure, coronary artery disease, and damage to the heart muscle, all of which increase the risk of heart failure.



WHY DOES IT MATTER?

Managing diabetes effectively can help prevent heart failure and its complications. Early diagnosis and treatment are key to improving quality of life and reducing hospitalizations.



RECOGNIZING THE SIGNS

HEART FAILURE SYMPTOMS

- Shortness of breath during daily activities or while lying down.
- Swelling in the legs, ankles, or feet.
- Fatigue and weakness.
- Rapid or irregular heartbeat.

DIABETES SYMPTOMS

- Increased thirst and urination.
- Unexplained weight loss.
- Blurred vision.
- Numbness or tingling in hands and feet.



HOW ARE DIABETES AND HEART FAILURE MANAGED TOGETHER?

MEDICATIONS:

- **GLP-1 Receptor Agonists:** Medications like semaglutide (e.g., Ozempic) lower blood sugar, promote weight loss, and have cardiovascular benefits, including reducing inflammation and improving heart health.
- **SGLT2 Inhibitors:** These help the kidneys remove excess sugar, reduce fluid retention, and lower the risk of hospitalization for heart failure.
- **Beta-Blockers and ACE Inhibitors:** Commonly prescribed for heart failure to help the heart pump more effectively.
- **Regularly monitor** blood sugar and blood pressure to prevent complications.

LIFESTYLE TIP:

- **Healthy Diet:** Choose whole grains, lean proteins, vegetables, and limit sugar and salt intake.
- **Stay Active:** Aim for 30 minutes of moderate exercise most days of the week, as recommended by your doctor.
- **Quit Smoking:** Smoking increases the risk of both diabetes and heart failure.
- **Manage Stress:** Practice mindfulness, meditation, or other stress-reducing activities.



WHY EARLY DETECTION MATTERS

Detecting diabetes and heart failure early allows for treatments that can prevent severe complications like heart attacks, kidney disease, or hospitalizations. Regular check-ups and screenings are crucial, especially if you have a family history of these conditions.



KEY QUESTIONS TO ASK YOUR DOCTOR

Am I at risk of heart failure due to my diabetes?

What steps can I take to protect my heart health?

Are there specific medications or treatments I should consider?

How often should I monitor my blood sugar and heart health?

DIAGNOSTIC TOOLS FOR DIABETES AND HEART FAILURE

BLOOD TESTS

To measure blood sugar levels and check for markers of heart damage.

ECHOCARDIOGRAM

An ultrasound of the heart to evaluate its structure and function.

STRESS TEST

To assess how well your heart works under physical activity.

CONTINUOUS GLUCOSE MONITORING (CGM)

A device to track blood sugar trends in real time.

Take Action Today!

Living well with diabetes and heart failure is possible. Talk to your doctor about creating a personalized care plan. Managing both conditions together can improve your quality of life and help you stay active and healthy.



HEARTLIFE ACADEMY

For more information on diabetes and other support please visit us at heartlife.ca/academy/



HeartLife FOUNDATION

Canada's patient-led heart disease charity
"It's About Life, Not Failure™"



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Our Mission

The HeartLife Foundation is a patient-driven charity whose mission is to transform the quality of life for people living with cardiovascular diseases by engaging, educating, and empowering a global community. We aim to create lasting solutions, drive innovation, and build healthier lives for patients, caregivers, and families worldwide.

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