



Calderdale and Huddersfield

NHS Foundation Trust

Patient Information Leaflet

Congestive Heart Failure (CHF) on Same Day Emergency Care (SDEC)

What is Congestive Heart Failure?

Congestive heart failure (CHF) is a long-term condition where the heart is not able to pump blood as effectively as it should. This does **not** mean the heart has stopped working, but that it is weaker or stiffer than normal.

This can cause a build-up of fluid in the lungs and other parts of the body, leading to symptoms such as breathlessness and swelling.

Common Symptoms

You may experience:

- Shortness of breath (especially when lying flat or walking)
- Swelling in your ankles, legs, or abdomen
- Feeling tired or weak
- Rapid weight gain (due to fluid retention)
- Persistent cough (sometimes with frothy sputum)
- Reduced ability to exercise or carry out daily activities

Why Has This Happened?

Heart failure can be caused by:

- Previous heart attack
- High blood pressure
- Heart valve problems
- Irregular heart rhythms
- Cardiomyopathy (disease of the heart muscle)

Your Treatment Today (SDEC)

During your visit today, you may have received:

- Blood tests
- Chest X-ray
- ECG (heart tracing)
- Diuretics (water tablets or injections to remove excess fluid)
- Oxygen therapy (if needed)

Your symptoms should begin to improve as excess fluid is reduced.

Medications

You may be prescribed medications such as:

- Diuretics (e.g., furosemide) to reduce fluid – water tablets
- ACE inhibitors or ARBs to help your heart work more efficiently
- Beta-blockers to control heart rate and reduce strain
- Other medications depending on your condition and other medical comorbidities

Important:

- Take your medications exactly as prescribed
- Do not stop them without medical advice

Self-Care at Home

To help manage your condition:

1. Monitor Your Weight

- Weigh yourself daily at the same time
- Sudden weight gain (e.g., 2 kg in 3 days) may indicate fluid build-up

2. Fluid Intake

- Follow any fluid restrictions advised by your doctor

3. Salt Intake

- Reduce salt in your diet, as it can worsen fluid retention

4. Activity

- Stay active but pace yourself
- Rest when needed

5. Smoking and Alcohol

- Stop smoking
- Limit alcohol intake

When to Seek Urgent Medical Help

Please seek urgent medical attention if you experience:

- Severe or worsening breathlessness
- Chest pain
- Fainting or dizziness
- Rapid swelling of legs or abdomen
- Confusion or extreme fatigue

Follow-Up Care

- You may be referred to a heart failure specialist team
- Regular GP or clinic follow-up is important
- You may need further tests such as an echocardiogram (heart scan)

Contact Information

If you have concerns or worsening symptoms, contact:

- Your GP
- Heart Failure Nurse Team (if provided)
- NHS 111 (non-emergency advice)
- Emergency services (999) in urgent situations

Key Message

Heart failure can be managed effectively with the right treatment and lifestyle changes. Early recognition of symptoms and prompt action can prevent hospital admission and improve your quality of life.

This leaflet is intended for patients attending Same Day Emergency Care (SDEC). Please follow the advice given by your healthcare professional.