Heart Failure and Depression

Depression is common in people with heart failure.
- It will affect about 70% of patients in the hospital.
- It will affect 24-42% of people with heart failure.
- It affects more women than men.

Depression can lead to more symptoms of heart failure and more time in the hospital. This can decrease your quality of life and make heart failure harder to treat.

Heart failure and depression have some of the same signs and symptoms. Treating depression can improve your health status.

Once you have heart failure, people react in different ways. Many people will have anxiety, denial, depression, and fear. It is ok to have these feelings, but it is important to be aware of them and talk to your health care provider. Then, you can make a plan to cope with these feelings.

Signs of Depression
- Feeling sad, lonely, and gloomy
- Having less energy or no energy to do things that you used to do
- Need more or less sleep
- No desire for food or eating more food than usual
- Weight changes
- Having thoughts of guilt, worthlessness, hopelessness or suicide
- Feel like you have nothing to live for

Signs of Heart Failure
- You have no energy
- Tire easily
- Feeling crabby and on edge
- Don’t want to eat
- Hard to breathe when at rest or lying flat
- Gain weight despite loss of appetite
- Swollen abdomen, legs, arms, and face
- Out of breath or cough
- Chest congestion

What can you do?
Health habits and choices can help you feel better and improve your heart failure and depression.
- Avoid tobacco and alcohol.
- Eat a heart-healthy diet.
- Exercise—it can reduce your depressive symptoms and improve cardiac fitness.
- Get enough sleep.
- Take your medicines.

Talk to your health care provider if you notice any signs and symptoms of depression. Learn about your illness and how it affects you. Think about how you cope with stress and write down what helps you cope and what does not help. Some skills to cope are:
- Talk to your family and friends.
- Stay active with your hobbies/activities that you like to do.
- Learn to relax.
- Learn to avoid blaming yourself.
- Write a “to do list” and rest in between the tasks.
• Allow yourself grieving time—everyone needs time to come to term with changes in your life.
• Join a support group— you are not alone.
• Seek extra help to deal with grief, anxiety, depression, and other problems.

Resources for You
American Heart Association
www.heart.org

Heart Failure Society of America
www.hfsa.org

www.mentalhealthamerica.net
mendedhearts.org

www.namiwisconsin.org

UW Health Heart Failure Program
(608) 263-1690

National Alliance on Mental Health-Dane County
www.namidaneCounty.org
(608) 249-7188
contact@namidaneCounty.org
2059 Atwood Avenue, 4th floor
Madison, WI 53704