

QUESTIONS TO ASK YOUR DOCTOR



If you've been diagnosed with heart failure, there are several key questions that you should ask your cardiologist during your next visit. These questions will ensure that you and your doctor have discussed your major risk factors so that you can become or stay as healthy as possible.

1: What is heart failure and what is the cause of mine?

Very important to know cause of your heart failure.

2: What is my current heart function?

Its defined as Left Ventricular Ejection Fraction (EF). Its considered normal if EF >60%.

3: What is my prognosis?

50 % of severe heart failure patients will die in 5 years. Its important to know about your and your loved ones overall prognosis.

4: What are my treatment options?

There are many options for heart failure which range from medical treatment alone or plus/minus special pacemakers, Defibrillators, and in some cases, Heart Transplant. Do discuss treatment options with your doctors.

5: Which of my medicines is for heart failure?

Its important to go over your medications with your doctor. Always take your medications when visiting your Cardiologists. If possible, always keep a list of current medications in your purse or valet.

6: Would I benefit from advanced therapy like a defibrillator or left ventricular assist device?

Depending upon your age and other diseases, your doctor may recommend you for advanced therapy. Please do discuss it with your Cardiologist.

7: What signs and symptoms should I look for to tell me my heart failure is getting worse?

Its the most important question to ask. A Heart Failure nurse can also help you understand your symptoms better.

8: When should I call you?

A Heart Failure Nurse at the CHARM clinic will guide you. Please do ask this question when visiting your Cardiologist.

9: What can I eat and how much alcohol can I drink?

Alcohol can have bad effects on heart patients, especially with severe heart failure. Please do ask this question and discuss it in detail. Its important to restrict salt in diet and consultation with a Dietitian is recommended.

10: What sort of exercise should I do, and what should I avoid?

Please read article on this in the current edition of DilWalk magazine. Please do discuss in detail with your Cardiologist.

11: How can I get refer to Community Heart Failure Management (CHARM) clinic in Calgary?

Please ask your family doctor to refer you to the Alberta's ONLY community based heart failure clinic. This clinic is run on charitable basis and its FREE for patients with Heart Failure.

