

What is heart failure?

Heart failure affects **1 in 5** people.

Heart failure does not mean the heart has stopped working.

It means the heart is not pumping enough blood to meet the body's needs, which may cause tiredness, breathlessness and fluid build-up.



Common symptoms of heart failure



Shortness of Breath

You may feel breathless during normal activity, walking upstairs or even when lying down.



Fatigue

You may have a persistent feeling of low energy or exhaustion, even with little activity.



Swelling or Unexpected Weight Gain

Fluid may build up in your ankles, legs or abdomen.

If left untreated, symptoms may get worse. **Early recognition is key.**

Risk factors for heart failure

Anyone can develop heart failure, but you may be at higher risk if you have:

- high blood pressure (hypertension) – this is the most common risk factor
- coronary artery disease or a previous heart attack
- diabetes or metabolic syndrome – a combination of high blood pressure, high blood sugar, abnormal cholesterol and increased waist size
- lifestyle factors such as smoking, obesity, poor diet, inactivity and excessive alcohol use
- older age – risk increases after 65
- a family history of heart disease or heart failure
- thyroid disorders – overactive or underactive

What to do if you think you have heart failure

- Contact your GP if you notice new or worsening symptoms.
- Do not delay seeking medical guidance. Early diagnosis improves outcomes.
- If you're feeling unsure, both the **Irish Heart Foundation** and **Croí** offer free nurse-led support lines for questions, reassurance and next steps.

Support available to you

Heart failure can be overwhelming but support is available, and many people live full, active lives with proper guidance and self-management.

Both **Croí** and the **Irish Heart Foundation** provide high-quality supports to help people living with heart failure, their families, and caregivers.



**Irish Heart
Foundation**
Here for Every Heartbeat

Nurse Support Line & Additional Services

Free telephone support line to speak confidentially with expert Cardiac Nurses

Available 9am to 5pm every Monday and from 9am to 1pm, Tuesday to Friday

- Call: 01 668 5001
- Email: support@irishheart.ie

Additional supports for long-term self-management include:

- Heart Connect – Phone-based emotional and educational support for heart failure patients
- Peer-led monthly meet-ups (in person & online)
- Support & information evenings nationwide
- Access to free counselling

For more information visit the Irish Heart Foundation website at irishheart.ie



Fighting Heart Disease & Stroke

Croí Connects Helpline & Online Chats

Free telephone helpline staffed by Cardiovascular Nurse Specialists

Available weekdays 9am–5:30pm

- Call: 091 332999
- Email: healthteam@croi.ie

Weekly online health chats also available:

In addition to the telephone helpline, Croí Connects also brings people together through weekly online health chats every every Tuesday from 1 – 2 pm.

These informal sessions create a welcoming space for people to learn more about topics related to heart health and stroke, ask questions, and connect with others who may be on a similar journey.

For more information visit the Croí website.

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