

Q: WHAT TREATMENTS ARE AVAILABLE?

A: Once CHF is diagnosed (usually with an echocardiogram or sonogram of the heart), a variety of treatments can help the heart work better, relieve symptoms, enhance the quality of life and even improve a patient's survival.

Your doctor will likely follow national standards of care for treating CHF. Medications are usually the first line of treatment. Some of the medications your doctor may prescribe include ACE inhibitors, angiotension II receptor blockers, beta blockers, digoxin and diuretics. In addition, patients whose CHF is caused by a weakening of the heart muscle should be evaluated by a specialist to see if they are candidates for implantable defibrillators or biventricular pacemakers that can help regulate the heartbeat and improve the heart's pumping ability. In severe cases, patients may need heart transplants.



Medications are usually the first line of treatment.

Q: HOW WILL I KNOW IF MY CHF IS GETTING WORSE?

A: It's important to pay attention to your body and your symptoms if you have CHF. For example, you should weigh yourself daily because gaining weight may be a sign that your condition is getting worse and you're retaining fluids. Ask your doctor to help you develop an action plan that specifies what you should do if you gain weight, develop new symptoms or your symptoms change. Follow your action plan or call your doctor if you notice any worrisome symptoms.



Weigh yourself daily to see if you are retaining fluids.



For more information about congestive heart failure, please visit www.wellingtonregional.com and click on **Health Information** in the left column. Under **Library** on the left side of the next page, click on **Diseases & Conditions**, then select **H** and scroll down to **Heart Failure, What Is**.



Diabetes:

Staying a Step Ahead of Foot Problems

When you consider that diabetes can lead to heart disease, stroke, blindness and kidney failure, diabetes-related foot problems may not seem like a major concern. But foot disorders can threaten the health and the lives of people with diabetes. In fact, foot disease results in more hospitalizations than any other complication from diabetes.

“People with diabetes are at greater risk for foot ulcers, infections and amputation,” says Jorge I. Acevedo, MD, a board-certified foot and ankle surgeon and Medical Director of the Diabetic Foot & Wound Clinic at the Center for Wound Care & Hyperbaric Medicine at Wellington.

Over time, the high blood-sugar levels associated with diabetes take their toll on your body. They can damage blood vessels, impair circulation and harm the tissues, nerves and muscles. When these changes occur in your legs and feet they can:

- Decrease circulation and hamper your body's natural healing ability.
- Cause nerve damage that may lead to a tingling feeling or a loss of sensation that can make it difficult for you to feel foot ulcers or wounds.
- Weaken the small muscles in your feet, which can increase your risk for hammertoes and other deformities.
- Alter your skin so that it's more prone to cracks or splits, athlete's foot and other skin disorders.

At the Diabetic Foot & Wound Clinic at Wellington, we recognize the unique needs of the patient who has diabetes and offer comprehensive foot care and an aggressive treatment team.

Each patient who develops acute or chronic foot disease is evaluated and an individualized treatment plan is prescribed to stimulate healing. Treatments may include: use of advanced wound care dressings and topical products; surgical debridement to remove unhealthy tissue; infection, hyperbaric oxygen or compression therapy; skin grafts; and education to teach patients how to take care of wounds and prevent future wounds.

“Our goal is to help people with diabetes keep their feet healthy so they can stay mobile,” says Dr. Acevedo. “People who are physically active are better able to control their disease and enjoy their lives.”



Jorge I. Acevedo, MD, is the Medical Director of the Diabetic Foot & Wound Clinic at Wellington. He is a board-certified orthopedic surgeon specializing in foot and ankle injuries and conditions. For more information about the services available at the clinic, please call **561-753-2680**.