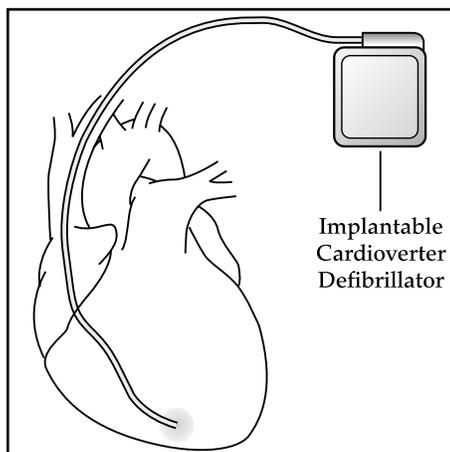


# Chapter 4: Other Treatments

Medicine may not be enough to help your heart or prevent serious problems. Your health care provider will talk with you about your other treatment options.

## Implantable Cardioverter-defibrillator (ICD)



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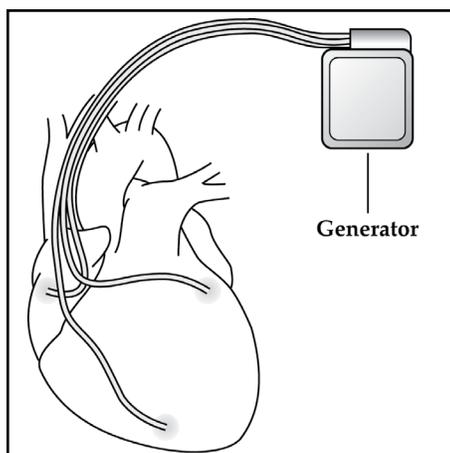
**An ICD can help control or correct a dangerous heart rhythm.**

Heart failure can cause your heart to beat too fast or in an irregular way. An implantable cardioverter-defibrillator (ICD) may help control or correct this dangerous rhythm. The ICD sends an electrical shock to your heart to return it to a regular rhythm.

An ICD uses lead wires that are connected to a pulse generator. A tiny computer in the ICD senses any life-threatening rhythm problems and sends an electrical shock to your heart to correct it.

If you receive an electrical shock, you must call your health care provider. He or she may want to see you for a follow-up visit.

## Biventricular Pacemaker



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**A biventricular pacemaker can help improve your blood flow.**

The chambers of your heart may lose the ability to contract (shrink) together. The heart can't pump as much blood if the chambers don't move together. A special kind of pacemaker may help.

A biventricular pacemaker has 2 parts: a battery (pulse generator) and 3 lead wires (electrodes).

- One wire goes into the upper part of the right side of your heart (right atrium).
- One wire goes into the right ventricle.
- One wire is threaded into the coronary vein to the left ventricle.

The battery sends an electrical impulse to your heart. This causes the right and left ventricles to pump together. By coordinating the chambers, your body will get better blood flow.

## Intravenous (IV) Therapies

There are many medicines that can help manage your symptoms. Some of these are given through an intravenous (IV) line in your hand or arm.

## Ultra-filtration

Ultra-filtration is a special IV system that removes fluid. This short-term process will be done in the hospital.

## Left Ventricular Assist Device (LVAD)

A left ventricular assist device (LVAD) is a pumping device. It is implanted into your abdomen and connected to a power pack. The power pack is attached to a belt you wear around your waist.

When your heart beats, the LVAD pumps too. This helps add a boost to your heart's pumping ability.

## Defibrillator

If your heart has been working at less than 35 percent for more than 3 months, your heart is likely to go into different rhythms. This can cause sudden death.

An implantable cardioverter-defibrillator (ICD) may help control or correct this dangerous rhythm. It is placed near your heart and reads every heartbeat.

If you have an abnormal heartbeat, the ICD sends a shock to your heart to return it to a normal rhythm. The ICD won't treat heart failure or make it better. It's like having a paramedic with you in case there are problems.

## Heart Transplant

A heart transplant may be an option if you have severe heart failure, have not responded to other treatments, and if you are in overall good health.

A surgeon would replace your heart with a healthy heart from someone who has died. Life after a transplant involves taking many medicines to keep your new heart working well.

# Pulmonary Artery Pressure Monitor



The CardioMEMS™ photo used with permission, Abbott

A pulmonary artery pressure monitoring sensor is able to see changes in the pressure of blood flowing through the vessel between your heart and lungs. These changes can alert your health care team that your heart failure is getting worse, even before you notice any symptoms.

- A tiny sensor is inserted into your pulmonary artery through a short procedure. (Your health care provider will talk with you about the risks and benefits.)
- You take a reading of the sensor each day from your home. The monitor sends the reading to your health care provider.
- Your health care provider reviews the information received from the sensor. He or she will call you if changes are needed to your medicines or treatment.

Regular monitoring allows you and your health care team to get ahead of your heart failure before it gets worse. This can help improve your quality of life and reduce hospital stays.

## Palliative Care

Heart failure is a disease you will have for the rest of your life. Many medicines used to treat heart failure can help you live longer and feel better, but as heart failure gets worse, you may have symptoms even though you are taking medicines and carefully following sodium and fluid guidelines.

Palliative care can be a good option to consider for help with the heart failure symptoms. Palliative care is for anyone who is in any stage of an advanced illness. It:

- treats your symptoms and emotional and spiritual concerns
- helps you and your family understand your illness, treatment choices, options for community resources
- can help you be as independent and comfortable as possible while living each day to the fullest.

Palliative care services can be provided at home, in the clinic, in the hospital, or other types of settings. You and your family have telephone access to a palliative care nurse 24 hours a day.

Palliative care may decrease the number of times you have hospital stays and it may help you avoid unnecessary Emergency Department visits. Call 651-635-9173 for more information.

## Hospice Care

You and your family may find peace of mind knowing that end-stage heart failure can be managed and treated in a non-hospital setting.

Hospice care is a special way of caring for you, your family and your caregivers if you have 6 months or less to live. Hospice focuses on your comfort and quality of life while treating your physical, emotional and spiritual needs. The focus is on comfort and providing the highest quality of life possible.

Hospice keeps you comfortable and not suffering while “nature takes its course.” Only medicines and actions to make you more comfortable are used or added. Dying is not hurried or delayed.

Hospice is covered by most insurers, including Medicare, Medicaid and private insurers. Care can be provided in your home, a nursing home or a residential hospice. Call 651-635-9173 or 1-800-261-0879 for more information.