Heart failure is a condition in which the heart can no longer pump enough blood to the rest of the body. Heart failure is a long-term (chronic) condition, but it can sometimes develop suddenly. The condition may affect only the right side or only the left side of the heart. These are called right-sided heart failure or left-sided heart failure. More often, both sides of the heart are involved.

Heart failure is present when:

- Your heart muscle cannot pump (eject) the blood out of the heart very well.
- Your heart muscles are stiff and do not fill up with blood easily.

Both of these problems mean the heart is no longer able to pump enough oxygen-rich blood out to the rest of your body, especially when you exercise or are active. As the heart's pumping action is lost, blood may back up in other areas of the body. Fluid builds up in the lungs, liver, gastrointestinal tract, and the arms and legs. This is called congestive heart failure.

Symptoms of heart failure may include:

- shortness of breath from fluid in the lungs
- swelling (such as in legs, ankles or abdomen)
- dizziness
- fatigue
- weakness
- cold or clammy skin
- a rapid or irregular heartbeat.

Heart failure can be a result of heart condition due to:

- hardening of the arteries, also known as coronary artery disease,
- a heart attack,
- cardiomyopathy (heart muscle damage from infection or alcohol or drug abuse), or
- an overworked heart (caused over time by conditions like high blood pressure, kidney disease, diabetes, or a defect from birth).