SOUTH GEORGIAN BAY ONTARIO HEALTH TEAM

Are you at Risk of Congestive Heart Failure?

View document online

You could be one of estimated 750,000 Canadians living with Congestive Heart Failure (CHF). CHF is on the rise as more people survive heart attacks and other acute heart conditions. It's important to know the risk factors, symptoms and get tested so you can get the support you need to live well.

Know your Risk → **Spot the Symptoms** → **Get Tested**

Causes & Risk Factors

Understand the causes and know your personal risk factors so you can take steps to reduce your risk.

Causes

- Heart attack
- Coronary artery disease
- High blood pressure
- Heart valves disease
- Congenital heart disease
- Infection causing inflammation of the heart muscle
- Heart muscle disease of unknown causes
- Heart rhythm disorders (arrhythmia)
- Other medical conditions such as thyroid diseases or anemia

Risk Factors

- Diabetes
- High blood cholesterol
- Recreational drug use
- Excessive use of alcohol
- Exposure to chemotherapy or radiation therapy
- Smoking
- Unhealthy diet
- Not enough exercise
- Unhealthy weight
- Sex and age – men are more likely than women to have heart failure, but the difference grows less with age
- Being of African descent

Symptoms of CHF

If you have CHF, you may experience:

- Shortness of breath, especially when lying flat
- Sudden gain of more than 1.5 kg (3 pounds) over 1 to 2 days, or 2.5 kg (5 pounds) in a single week
- Bloating or feeling full all the time
- Cough or cold symptoms that last for longer than a week
- Extreme tiredness
- Loss of or change in appetite
- Increased swelling of the ankles, feet, legs, base of the spine or stomach area
- Increased urination at night
- Cool extremities
- Confusion and trouble thinking clearly

If you suspect you have symptoms of CHF, seek medical attention as soon as possible. These signs could lead to a serious life-threatening situation.

Testing

If you are experiencing symptoms of CHF, ask your provider about being tested. The earlier you are diagnosed the sooner you can take action and get the support you need to live well.

Types of tests:

- Blood test including brain natriuretic peptide test
- NT-proBNP
- Electrocardiogram (ECG)
- Chest X-ray
- Echocardiogram
- Stress test
- Coronary angiogram
- Magnetic resonance imaging (heart MRI)

Need a local family doctor?

Join the Health Care Connect waitlist (You do not need to leave your family physician to join).

Ontario.ca/healthcareconnect 8-1-1

Have you been diagnosed with CHF?

Do not worry! There are many supports and resources available for you across South Georgian Bay. Flip the page to explore our pathway to support and find free programs, education and services to help you live well with CHF.

Version 1: Last updated October 2026

Living Well with Congestive Heart Failure

View this document online

Your pathway to support in South Georgian Bay

Free programs, education and services to help you manage your CHF and improve your health.

Are you...
- Living with CHF
- At risk for CHF
- A family member or caregiver

Get the support that's right for you
Explore free programs, education and resources available in South Georgian Bay

Better health, stronger you.
Build knowledge, confidence and skills to live well with CHF.

Individual Management Support

Work one-on-one with healthcare providers to create an individualized management and care plan

South Georgian Bay Heart Function Clinic
www.gbfht.ca/physical-health-2/heart-function-clinic/
705 - 444 - 5885

Collingwood Cardiology & Internal Medicine
www.collingwoodcardiology.com/home/
705 - 444 - 1648

Hypertension Clinic
www.gbfht.ca/physical-health-2/hypertension/
705 - 444 - 5885

Education and Peer Support

Learn, connect and share with others

Cardiovascular Rehab Program
6 month supervised exercise group
www.gbfht.ca/physical-health-2/
705 - 444 - 5885

Exercise Maintenance Program
Virtual gentle fitness group
www.southgeorgianbaychc.ca
705 - 422 - 1888

Living a Healthy Life with Chronic Conditions
Virtual skill building program
www.southgeorgianbaychc.ca
705 - 422 - 1888

Smoking Cessation Program
www.gbfht.ca/physical-health-2/
705 - 444 - 5885

Caregiver and Life-Limiting Illness Groups
www.hospicegeorgiantriangle.com
705-444-2555 x 7513

Additional Resources

Other options for support along your journey

Hospice Shared Care Team and Advance Care Planning
Provides free support to individuals with a life-limiting illness such as, CHF.
www.hospicegeorgiantriangle.com
705-444-2555 x 7524

OTN Telehomecare program
Remote monitoring and health coaching sessions in your home.
www.ontariohealthathome.ca/home-care/telehomecare/
1-833-515-1234

Community Paramedicine Home Visit Program
Community paramedics provide comprehensive in-home assessments
www.simcoe.ca/residents/paramedic-services/community-paramedicine/

Go to the hospital or call 911 if you are experiencing severe symptoms such as:
- Struggling to breathe
- Shortness of breath at rest
- Chest pain that does not go away
- You are confused or can't think clearly.
- Severe dizziness/lightheadedness.

Most Services are FREE and available to everyone in South Georgian Bay

Ask your healthcare provider for more information or dial 2-1-1 to learn about other supports available in your area.

Version 1: Last updated October 2026

CONGESTIVE HEART FAILURE PROGRAMS & SUPPORTS IN SOUTH GEORGIAN BAY

Information for Patients, Families, Caregivers and Community Partners

Living Well with Congestive Heart Failure (CHF)

If you are living with CHF, a variety of free programs and services are available in South Georgian Bay to help you manage your health, build confidence, and connect with professional support. Services are available to residents of Collingwood, Wasaga Beach, Clearview Township, and The Blue Mountains.

You Are Not Alone

Managing CHF can be challenging, but support is available. Healthcare providers, and community organizations throughout South Georgian Bay are here to help you live well with CHF.

Individual Management Support

South Georgian Bay Heart Function Clinic

The Heart Function Clinic is a specialized outpatient program designed to support patients living with heart failure, those newly diagnosed with heart failure, or those with reduced heart function. The clinic provides comprehensive care aimed at improving symptoms, preventing hospitalizations, and enhancing quality of life through personalized medical management and patient education.

This clinic is available for anyone in the community through a referral from your Family Physician, Nurse Practitioner (NP), or Cardiologist.

Services may include:

- Personalized symptom management plan, medication adjustments and education
- Assistance connecting to services and community supports
- Nutrition, physical activity and lifestyle recommendations

705-444-5885 ext. 6203

www.gbfht.ca/physical-health-2/heart-function-clinic/

Collingwood Cardiology & Internal Medicine

The cardiologists at this clinic will work with you and your family doctor to provide outpatient cardiology care. This clinic accepts both self-referrals through the phone number below and referrals from your primary care provider.

Services include:

- Ambulatory Blood Pressure Monitoring
- Holter and Cardiostat Monitoring
- Contrast Echocardiography
- Electrocardiography
- Exercise Stress Testing
- Stress Echocardiography
- Bubble Study
- Echocardiography

705-444-1648

www.collingwoodcardiology.com/home/

SOUTH GEORGIAN BAY ONTARIO HEALTH TEAM

Hypertension Clinic

CHF can be caused by hypertension (high blood pressure), making it important to manage your high blood pressure to reduce CHF symptoms and prevent hospitalization. The Hypertension clinic can provide you with services including:

- Education or information about blood pressure and hypertension.
- A review of lifestyle changes to achieve healthy blood pressure or hypertension control.
- Ongoing blood pressure monitoring.
- Help in reducing your blood pressure, along with the help of your Family Doctor or Nurse Practitioner.

Through the hypertension clinic patients can access two options for monitoring their blood pressure:

1. A 24-hour ambulatory blood pressure monitor, which automatically measures blood pressure every 30 minutes over a 24 hour period to provide a comprehensive assessment.
2. A home blood pressure monitor that can be used to check blood pressure twice daily.

Both options generate a detailed report that will be reviewed and shared with your doctor or nurse practitioner to support your care.

To access the hypertension clinic, you will need a referal from your primary care provider.

705-444-5885 ext. 6203

www.gbfht.ca/physical-health-2/hypertension/

Education and Peer Support Groups

Community-based education and peer support opportunities may be available throughout the year. Benefits include:

✓ Learning from others living with CHF
✓ Sharing experiences and practical tips
✓ Building confidence in self-management
✓ Access to healthcare professionals and educators

Living a Healthy Life with Chronic Conditions

- Offered virtually through ZOOM. Pre-registration using the link or phone number below required.
- 6 week program for anyone living with a chronic condition including heart failure, diabetes, & lung disease.
- Learn skills to help better manage symptoms and support daily activities. Topics include fatigue management, mind-body connection, action plans, problem-solving, dealing with difficult emotions, physical activity and preventing falls, healthy eating, pain management, communication skills, planning for the future and more.

www.southgeorgianbaychc.ca/program/9/

705-422-0900 ext. 5108

SOUTH GEORGIAN BAY ONTARIO HEALTH TEAM

Cardiovascular Rehabilitation Program

- Weekly 90 minute supervised exercise sessions for 6 months at the Collingwood or Wasaga Beach YMCA. Referral from primary care provider required.
- Sessions include warm up, strength training, aerobic training and cool down under the supervision of a Registered Kinesiologist and Rehabilitation Assistant.
- Heart rate, blood pressure and pulse oximetry monitoring will be available.
- Each session will begin with educational discussion and cover a wide range of topics related to exercise, and cardiovascular disease and its management. Education sessions are led by a Registered Kinesiologist.
- In addition to the brief education sessions that accompany exercise class, there are also a series of longer education classes covering topics such as Nutrition (Dietician) and Stress Management (Social Worker).
- Patients are welcome to bring their partner or other family members to these education sessions.

www.gbfht.ca/physical-health-2/cardiovascular-rehabilitation/ 705-444-5885

Smoking Cessation Program

- Program available to anyone in the community. Referral from primary care provider is preferred, however, self-referrals using the phone number below are also accepted.
- Program starts with a supportive group information session with TEACH certified smoking cessation counsellors
- At the end of the group session, participants can enroll in the STOP* program and receive free nicotine replacement therapy (patch, gum, lozenge, or inhaler) to support their quit plan
- Follow-up appointments are available either in person or via telephone to create a personalized quit plan and discuss strategies for managing and minimizing cravings and withdrawal symptoms

www.gbfht.ca/physical-health-2/smoking-cessation/ 705-444-5885

Exercise Maintenance Program

- Gentle fitness group meets online for 60 minutes of low-impact exercise each week. This program is for anyone looking to increase their physical activity in a home setting. Participants will learn how to incorporate resistance training into their health routine, and learn balance exercises and stretching.
- Tuesday and Friday from 9:15AM - 10:15AM on ZOOM.
- Pre-registration required.

www.southgeorgianbaychc.ca/program/1/ 705-422-0900 ext. 5108

Life-Limiting Illness Support Group and Caregiver Support Group

- Both groups are offered bi-weekly on Mondays from 2:00PM to 3:30PM at Hospice Georgian Triangle
- The life-limiting illness group offers a confidential and supportive space to connect with others with life-limiting illnesses such as, CHF.
- The caregiver support group provides caregivers an opportunity to meet other caregivers, learn practical skills, self-care techniques and coping strategies.

www.hospicegeorgiantriangle.com/respite-care/
705-444-2555 ext. 7513
voorbergv@hospicegeorgiantriangle.com

SOUTH GEORGIAN BAY ONTARIO HEALTH TEAM

Additional Resources

Hospice Shared Care Team and Advance Care Planning

The Shared Care Program provides free support to individuals living with a life-limiting illness.

- Explore what to expect with your illness
- Exploring goals of care and care preferences
- Connect you with services and community resources
- Coordinate care with your healthcare team

www.hospicegeorgiantriangle.com 705-444-2555 x 7524

OTN Telehomecare program

The program helps people living with conditions such as CHF and COPD learn to manage their condition in their own homes through remote monitoring and regular health coaching sessions. Patients can self refer using the number below. Support includes:

- Help checking your own blood pressure, weight, heart rate and pulse and a touchscreen tablet to send your results to your Telehomecare nurse.
- Direct communication with your nurse if your readings fall outside of your normal range.
- Weekly health coaching from your nurse, geared to your needs. This may include guidance regarding diet, exercise and other factors for optimal health.

www.ontariohealthathome.ca/home-care/telehomecare/ 1-833-515-1234

Community Paramedicine Home Visit Program

This program supports patients with chronic conditions to stay healthy and independent in their own homes by offering integrated, in-home care by Community Paramedics.

Community Paramedics work in collaboration with the patients primary care provider to perform:

- Wellness Checks
- Physical Assessments
- Vital Signs (including ECG)
- Remote patient monitoring
- Blood Work
- Patient Education
- Symptom Relief
- COVID-19 Testing
- Influenza and COVID-19 Vaccinations
- Medication Compliance and Administration

www.simcoe.ca/residents/paramedic-services/community-paramedicine/

South Georgian Bay Navigation Support

3 ways to connect to local resources.

1. Search our local directory for resources based on keyword, topic or location
2. Call a provincial helpline
3. Contact our community navigator to get personalized suggestions for local resources

www.southgeorgianbayoht.ca/community-wellness/ 705-444-5885

2-1-1

Connect with a provincial navigator to learn about other supports available in your area.

www.211ontario.ca 2-1-1

Did you find this pathway to support helpful? Scan the QR code to share your feedback or visit: https://forms.cloud.microsoft/r/yYV7Av8vMR

Version 1: Last updated October 2026