Heart failure affects approximately 6.5 million Americans, and 900,000 new cases are diagnosed each year. Heart failure was once considered a “man’s disease,” but we now know that it is not the case. Heart failure can happen to anyone, but some are at greater risk than others.

About 3 million American women have heart failure. Of the 900,000 new cases of heart failure diagnosed each year, women account for 505,000. Women die from congestive heart failure more often than men, accounting for 56.3% of all heart failure deaths.

### Heart Failure Risk Factors

**Hypertension**
- **Coronary heart disease**
- **Obesity**

**Comorbidities**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Condition</th>
<th>Heart Failure Socioeconomic Burden</th>
<th>Hispanic-Americans</th>
<th>Heart Failure Socioeconomic Burden</th>
<th>Caucasian-Americans</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Diabetes</td>
<td>24 million</td>
<td>11.5 million</td>
<td>46.1 million</td>
<td>85.7 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heart Disease</td>
<td>34 million</td>
<td>10.1 million</td>
<td>38.7 million</td>
<td>77.6 million</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

About the Heart Failure Society of America, Inc.
In 1995, the late Dr. Thomas J. Fowler, Jr., MD, FACC, FAHA, organized the Heart Failure Society of America, Inc. (HFSA) to become the first organized effort by heart failure experts from the Americas to provide a forum for all those interested in heart function.

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### Understanding Heart Failure and Know Your Risk

**Heart Failure Symptoms**

- **Fatigue**
  - Fatigue is a common symptom of heart failure. Some people with heart failure report feeling tired even when they rest.
- **Shortness of breath**
  - Shortness of breath can be a sign of heart failure.
- **Coughing**
  - Coughing can be a sign of heart failure.
  - Coughing that produces mucus or pink, blood-tinged sputum
- **Edema or ankle swelling**
  - Edema is often a sign of heart failure.
- **Chest congestion**
  - Congestion in the chest can be a sign of heart failure.
- **Breathing difficulties**
  - Breathing difficulties can be a sign of heart failure.
- **Needing more than two pillows to sleep (orthopnea)**
  - Orthopnea can be a sign of heart failure.
- **Waking up breathless at night (paroxysmal nocturnal dyspnea)**
  - Paroxysmal nocturnal dyspnea can be a sign of heart failure.

**Fatigue**

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**Comorbidities**

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- **Hypertension**
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**Preventing heart failure means controlling (and where possible, preventing) the risk factors for heart failure.**

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**National statistics**

- **Nearly half of all non-Hispanic African Americans** have some form of hypertension. About 40 percent of African Americans have high blood pressure.
- **African Americans** have higher rates of heart failure than whites (3.5 to 2.4 per 1000 person-years, respectively).
- **African Americans** have higher rates of incidence of heart failure compared to whites (3.5 to 2.4 per 1000 person-years, respectively).
- **African American males** are at a particularly high risk for heart disease.
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**Among all ethnicities, African Americans are at a particularly high risk for heart failure.**

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**Coronary heart disease is the leading cause of deaths attributable to cardiovascular disease.**

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