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Home Health Aide On-the-Go In-service Lessons: Vol. 12, Issue 1: Congestive Heart Failure

Beacon Health a division of HCPro, Cheryl McDaniel RN MSN

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Congestive Heart Failure (CHF) is a serious medical condition in which the heart cannot pump enough blood to meet the body's needs. This inability may result in fluid retention, which causes swelling, for example, in the legs, feet, or abdomen. CHF is often caused by hypertension, diabetes, or coronary artery disease (CAD). It is estimated that 5.7 million people in the United States suffer from CHF, making the condition one of the most common causes of hospitalization for people 65 and older.

Home health agencies care for many patients suffering from CHF. Therefore, it is essential for HHAs to possess a basic understanding of the problems associated with the condition, as well as their role in caring for affected patients. Further, CHF is often the reason for a patient's return to the hospital after only a short stay at home. Proper care from your agency may help patients avoid unnecessary rehospitalizations. In addition, early diagnosis and treatment can improve quality of life and life expectancy for CHF patients, which is critical given that roughly one half of people who suffer from the condition die within five years of diagnosis.

LESSON OBJECTIVES

After completion of this program, the home health aide will be able to:

- Differentiate between systolic and diastolic failure
- Identify the common causes of congestive heart failure
- Recognize the signs and symptoms of congestive heart failure
- Explain how certain lifestyle changes by patients may prevent worsening of the condition

Contents of this lesson:

- A clearly written fact sheet
- A 10-question post-test to measure understanding of the subject matter
- An answer sheet with a place for the instructor's comments and signature
- An illustrative, homecare-specific case study
- Suggested supplemental learning activities
- An attendance log and certificate of completion

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