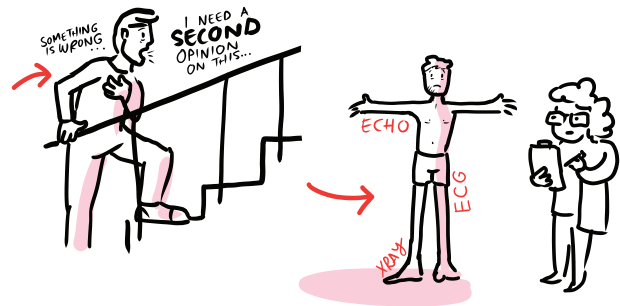


Diagnosing Heart Disease: What You Need to Know

For Patients and Caregivers

Heart disease is one of the leading causes of illness and death worldwide—but with early diagnosis and proper care, many people live long, healthy lives. This guide will help you understand how heart disease is diagnosed, what tests may be involved, and how you and your loved ones can prepare.



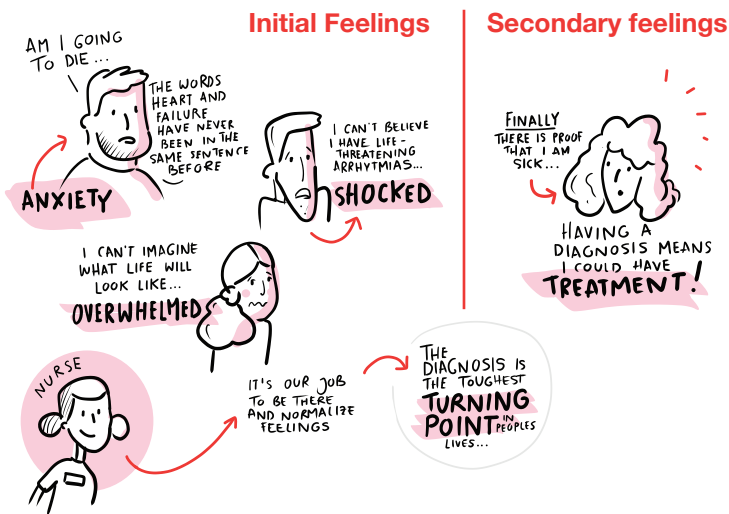
What is Heart Disease?

Heart disease refers to several types of conditions that affect the heart's ability to work properly. These may include coronary artery disease, heart failure, cardiomyopathies, arrhythmias, and heart valve disease.

How is Heart Disease Diagnosed?

Doctors use a variety of tools to understand how your heart is working. These include:

The Diagnosis (Patient Journey)



1 Biomarkers (Blood Tests)

- NT-proBNP: Helps detect and monitor heart failure
- Troponin: Identifies heart damage, especially during heart attacks
- Other labs: Cholesterol, Lp(a), electrolytes, kidney function, A1c

2 Imaging Tests

- Echocardiogram (Echo): Ultrasound of the heart to check structure and function
- Cardiac MRI: Provides detailed images of the heart muscle and inflammation
- CT Scan (Calcium Score or Angiogram): Detects blocked arteries

3 Genetic Testing and AI Tools

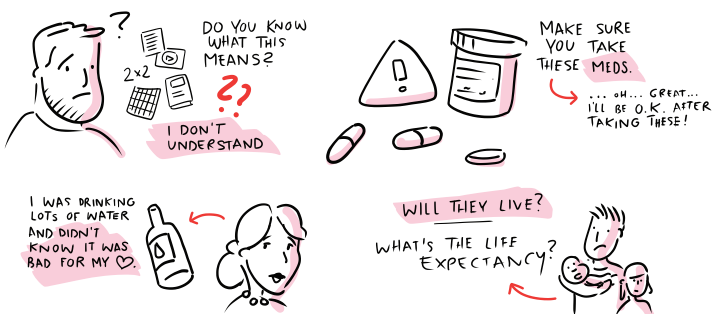
- Can identify inherited conditions or risks
- AI helps detect patterns earlier and supports treatment planning

4 Electrocardiogram (ECG or EKG)

- Measures the electrical activity of the heart
- Detects arrhythmias, heart attacks, and more

Education (What does this mean?)

Everyone wants to know what's going to happen next



Why diagnosis matters:

- Early detection saves lives
- It allows for earlier treatment
- It helps prevent complications



What to Expect

- You may need several tests over time
- Some tests are done in a hospital, others at your doctor's office
- Always ask what each test is for and how to prepare

Tip:

Bring a support person and a notebook to appointments. Take notes and ask questions.

Questions to Ask Your Care Team

- What is the purpose of this test?
- What are we looking for?
- What do the results mean?
- Will this change my treatment plan?

Tips for Patients and Caregivers

- Learn about the tests and treatments
- Keep a folder of test results and notes
- Attend all follow-ups, even if you feel fine
- Advocate for yourself or your loved one

You are not alone.

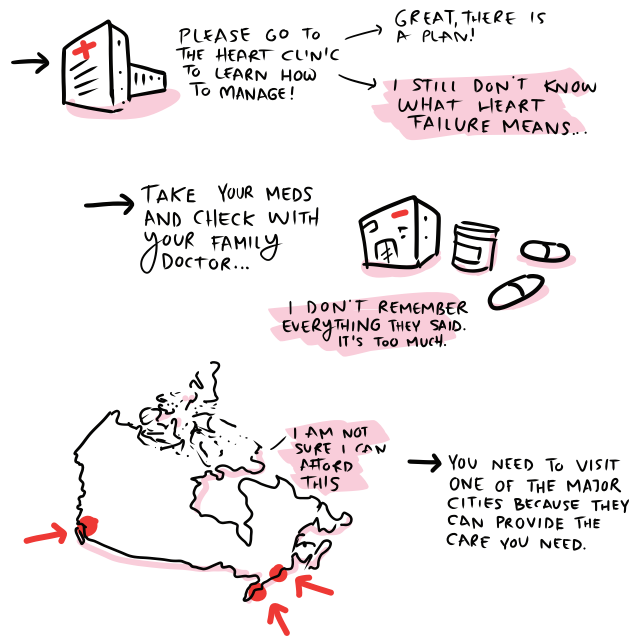
Many people live well with heart disease—with the right care and support.

Mission

The HeartLife Foundation is a patient-driven charity whose mission is to transform the quality of life for people living with cardiovascular diseases by engaging, educating, and empowering a global community. We aim to create lasting solutions, drive innovation, and build healthier lives for patients, caregivers, and families worldwide.

For more information on Diagnosing Heart Disease and other support please visit us at heartlife.ca/academy/ heartlife.academy

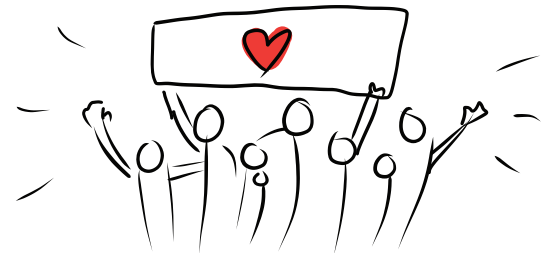
Discharge (Patient Journey)



Visit heartlife.academy for more information and videos on heart disease diagnosis and care.

HeartLife Foundation

Canada's patient-led heart failure charity
"It's About Life, Not Failure™"



www.heartlife.ca

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