CHF or Congestive Heart Failure

What is it?
In congestive heart failure, the heart does not pump normally and works harder than it should. When the heart cannot pump enough blood out to the body, blood backs up through the lungs and into the body. Congestive heart failure is also called CHF.

Who can get it?
Children born with some heart or lung defects may get CHF. Not all defects cause CHF.

What does it look like?
Signs that the heart is working harder than it should:
- Fast or heavy breathing
- Wet cough
- Weight gain from swelling
- Poor feeding
  — throws up
  — irritable
  — too tired to eat
- Poor weight gain
- Sweating on the head while eating
- Not interested in playing
- Sleeping more than usual
- Blue lips, fingers or toes

If your child shows any of these signs, call your child’s doctor or cardioligist.
What is the treatment?
Congestive heart failure can be treated with medicine. Some medicines take off extra fluid, some help the heart pump stronger, and some make it easier for the blood to move through the body. Your child may need to take one or several medicines to treat the congestive heart failure.

Babies with CHF may have trouble eating. They may be too tired, weak, or need to rest during feeds. They may use so much energy to eat, and eat so little that they don’t gain weight well. If this happens to your baby, talk to your doctor. The doctor may change the formula to one with more calories, so your baby doesn’t have to eat as much to get the needed nutrition.

Your child with CHF can live a normal life.

Now that you’ve read this:
☐ Tell your nurse or doctor the signs of CHF. (Check when done.)
☐ Tell your nurse or doctor what you would do if your child had signs of congestive heart failure. (Check when done.)

If you have any questions or concerns,
☐ call your child’s doctor or ☐ call __________________________
If you want to know more about child health and illness, visit our library at The Emily Center at Phoenix Children’s Hospital
1919 East Thomas Road
Phoenix, AZ 85016
602-933-1400
866-933-6459
www.phoenixchildrens.org
www.theemilycenter.org
Facebook: facebook.com/theemilycenter
Twitter: @emilycenter
Pinterest: pinterest.com/emilycenter

Disclaimer
The information provided at this site is intended to be general information, and is provided for educational purposes only. It is not intended to take the place of examination, treatment, or consultation with a physician. Phoenix Children’s Hospital urges you to contact your physician with any questions you may have about a medical condition.
CHF or Congestive Heart Failure

Name of Health Care Provider: _______________________________
Date returned: ____________ ☐ db

Family Review of Handout

Health care providers: Please teach families with this handout.
Families: Please let us know what you think of this handout.

Would you say this handout is hard to read? ☐ Yes ☐ No
Would you say this handout is easy to read? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Please circle the parts of the handout that were hard to understand.

Would you say this handout is interesting to read? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Why or why not?

Would you do anything differently after reading this handout? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, what?

After reading this handout, do you have any questions about the subject? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, what?

#588

Si usted desea esta información en español, por favor pídesela a su enfermero o doctor.
Is there anything you don’t like about the drawings?  ☐ Yes  ☐ No
If yes, what?

What changes would you make in this handout to make it better or easier to understand?

Please return your review of this handout to your nurse or doctor or send it to the address below.

The Emily Center
Health Education Specialist
Phoenix Children’s Hospital
1919 East Thomas Road
Phoenix, AZ 85016-7710

Thank you for helping us!