

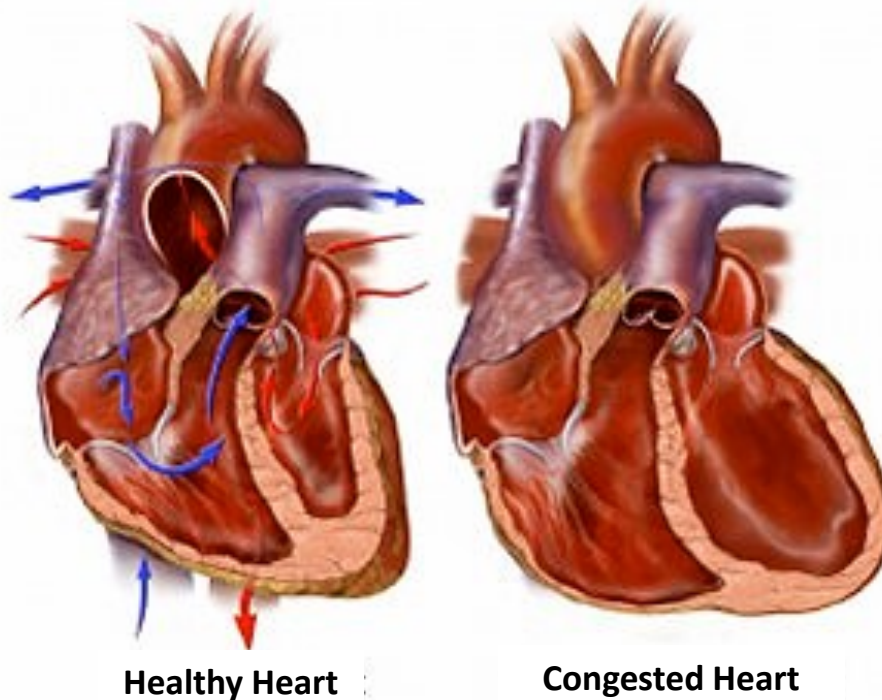


Cardiology Northwest

Congestive Heart Failure (CHF)

Congestive Heart Failure (CHF) is a common complication of heart disease, and refers to the heart's inability to adequately pump blood to the body. Animals are considered to be in congestive heart failure when they show clinical signs associated with fluid retention.

Clinical signs vary depending on whether the pet has left- or right-sided CHF. Symptoms of CHF include difficulty breathing, coughing, abdominal fluid retention, fatigue, and unexplained weight loss.



The treatment for CHF depends on the underlying heart disease and severity. The primary goals of treatment are to reduce fluid buildup and increase the amount of blood being pumped by the heart to the lungs and body. Often diuretics are used to get rid of fluid, while vasodilators are used to improve circulation. In addition, we must manage the pet's activity. Almost always, medications are used to control CHF rather than cure it. These efforts are designed to improve the quality and length of a pet's life.