

Guideline-Directed Medical Therapy for Reduced Ejection Fraction Heart Failure

What is Guideline-Directed Medical Therapy for Heart Failure?

Guideline-Directed Medical Therapy (GDMT) means using specific medicines to help people with heart failure. These medicines can make the heart work better and help people feel better. There are four types of medicines that doctors use to help treat heart failure. They may not make you feel better right away, but they will help your health over time. Your primary care doctor and cardiologist will work together to give you the right medicines. Some of these medicines are also used for other problems like high blood pressure or diabetes, but they can still help with heart failure, even if you don't have those other problems.

Why is GDMT important for patients with Reduced Ejection Fraction Heart Failure?

Each medicine in GDMT has a special role. These different medicines work together to make your heart stronger and to help you feel better. When taken together, these medicines can help reduce your symptoms, improve the quality of your life, and help you avoid trips to the hospital. By following the plan, you'll have more energy, fewer symptoms, and a happier heart. GDMT has been shown to reduce 2-year risk of mortality (death) by 73% for patients with reduced ejection fraction heart failure. Studies have estimated that sticking with GDMT can add on 5 years of life for the average 70-year-old.

What are the medicines?

1. **RAS Inhibitors (i.e., Lisinopril, Losartan, Valsartan, Sacubitril/Valsartan):** These medicines help relax blood vessels, which makes it easier for the heart to pump blood. They are often used for high blood pressure too. A newer combination medicine (Sacubitril/Valsartan) can provide greater benefit for heart failure patients compared to other RAS inhibitors, as it does even more to reduce strain on the heart and help you feel better.
2. **Aldosterone antagonists (i.e., Spironolactone, Eplerenone):** These medicines help balance salt and water in the body, which makes it easier for the heart to pump. They can also help you stop taking other medicines like potassium pills or strong water pills.
3. **SGLT2 Inhibitors (i.e., Dapagliflozin, Empagliflozin):** These are new medicines that help the body get rid of extra sugar through urine. They can help keep people with heart failure out of the hospital and make the heart work better. They are also used for diabetes and kidney problems.
4. **Beta Blockers (i.e., Metoprolol Succinate, Carvedilol, Bisoprolol):** These medicines help slow down the heart and make it work less hard. This makes the heart work better. They are also used for high blood pressure and fast heart rates. Some people with heart failure may not need this medicine.

Extra Tips:

- **Healthy Lifestyle:** Eating healthy food (with less salt) and exercising can help the medicines work better.
- **Water Pill:** This medicine can help get rid of extra sodium or salt in the body, which can make it easier to breathe and stop swelling. It can help with symptoms, but it is not a replacement for the other medicines.
- **Emergency Plan:** Know the signs of heart failure getting worse and call your doctor right away if you are worried. They can help you feel better and tell you what to do. If you need help after hours, you can access the Mercy On Call team by calling your primary care office phone number.
- **Talk to your doctor:** At every visit, talk to your doctor about your medicines and if they need to be changed. Bring your blood pressure, heart rate, and daily weights to help them decide. They will also check your blood and kidneys from time to time. Remember to take all your medicines every day. You are not alone. Your healthcare team is here to help you have a healthy heart!