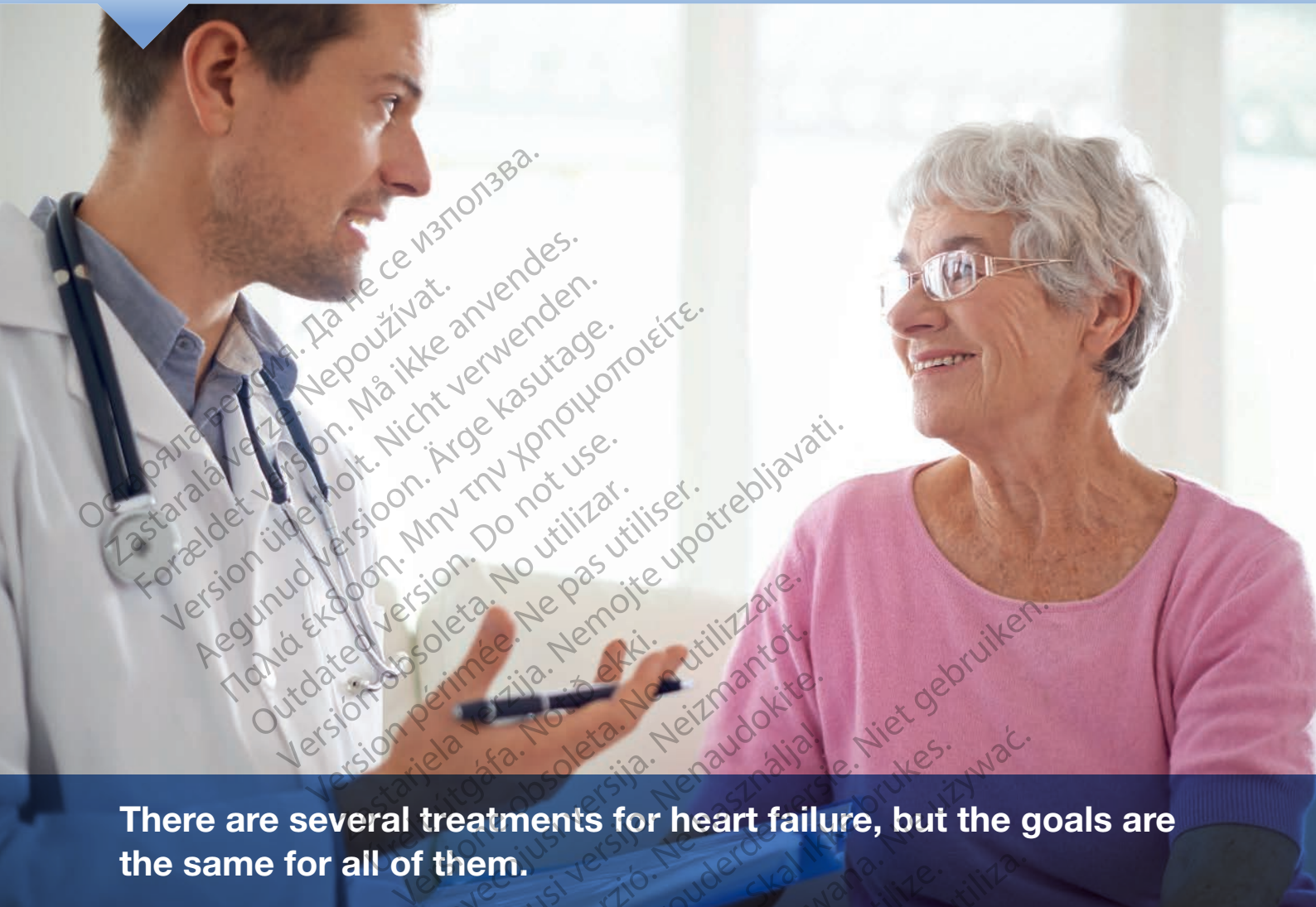




Understanding your treatment



There are several treatments for heart failure, but the goals are the same for all of them.

Those goals are to^{1a, 2a}



**Relieve
symptoms**



**Avoid hospital
admissions**



Prolong life

Your treatment will depend upon the nature of your own heart failure, but most people will take several medications. You probably take some of the following:

Name of Treatment	How/Why It Is Used
ACE inhibitors ^{1b,2b,3a}	ACE inhibitors work by dilating your blood vessels (opening them up), which makes the blood flow more easily and reduces blood pressure.
Beta-blockers ^{1b,2b,3a}	Beta-blockers work by slowing your heart down and protecting your heart.
Angiotensin receptor blockers (ARBs) ^{2c}	ARBs work in a similar way to ACE inhibitors by widening blood vessels and reducing blood pressure.
Diuretics ^{1c,3a}	Help body get rid of excess fluid and may relieve shortness of breath and reduce swelling.
Digoxin/Digitalis ^{3b,3c}	In combination with other heart failure medication, reduce symptoms, and may also make it easier to exercise.
Vasodilators ^{3c}	Widening blood vessels and reducing blood pressure.

These are not the only medicines used to treat heart failure, so you may find that you are prescribed other drugs. If this is the case, members of your healthcare team will be able to give you more information.

Some of the treatments for heart failure are given in the hospital. For example, some people with heart failure have a medical device, such as a valve replacement or an implanted defibrillator, placed in their body.



Side effects

Sometimes — but not always — people prescribed medicines for heart failure experience side effects. For example, you may have a dry cough, light-headedness, tiredness, swelling, headache or stomach upsets.

Some people find side effects upsetting, but **you should never stop taking your medicines without talking to your doctor first — simply stopping or cutting back on your medicine can be very dangerous.** Many side effects can be managed or treated, so always discuss them with a member of your healthcare team.

You should speak to your doctor before you take any over the counter medicines, supplements or herbal/alternative remedies, since these may affect your heart failure medications.

THE IMPORTANCE OF TREATMENT



It is very important to follow your treatment plan carefully. Doing this can really make a difference to your symptom management and your quality of life.

MONITORING IS A VITAL PART OF YOUR TREATMENT



Monitoring is a vital part of your treatment

You have probably discussed self care with your healthcare team. You will probably hear about it quite a lot! This is because,

self care is much more than just looking after yourself. Monitoring your own health and symptoms is a vital part of your treatment for heart disease.



For example, it is a good idea to weigh yourself everyday. This is because changes in weight can indicate changes in your heart health.



Throughout the programme we will send you e-mails, with hints and tips on looking after yourself, and on monitoring and tracking your symptoms.



Please remember — any new symptoms, or changes in symptoms, should always be reported to a member of your healthcare team.

If you happen to have an urgent medical concern, please call your doctor, go to your local emergency room, or call your local Emergency Contact number. Remember, your doctor is your primary source for information on your condition and treatment. Be sure to speak with them if you have any questions or concerns.

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