

Fatigue

[Sleepy-guy](#)

Fatigue, along with weakness or dizziness, is one of the earliest symptoms of heart failure. It is caused as a result of decreased cardiac output, impaired perfusion to vital organs, and decreased oxygenation to tissues. Energy management should be implemented when providing care, which includes organizing care to allow for rest periods throughout the day.

Tachycardia

[Tac-heart-card](#)

Tachycardia is an early symptom of heart failure and occurs as a result of the body attempting to compensate for a failing ventricle. The sympathetic nervous system is activated causing the heart rate to increase as a result of reduced cardiac output. The patient may also experience palpitations or angina.

Weak Peripheral Pulse

[Taking Pulse from Weak Arm](#)

A weak or thready peripheral pulse may be noted. Additionally, pulsus alternans (alternating weak and strong pulses) can occur.

S3, S4 Heart Sounds

[Triangular S3-stethoscope with \(4\) Fork](#)

S3 and S4 are both sounds heard from ventricular filling. S3 is related to an increase in filling pressure and occurs in early diastole. S3 may indicate heart failure, mitral regurgitation, or dilated cardiomyopathy, but may also be a normal heart sound in those less than 40 years old. S4 is related to a noncompliant left ventricle and occurs in late diastole. S4 may indicate hypertrophic cardiomyopathy.