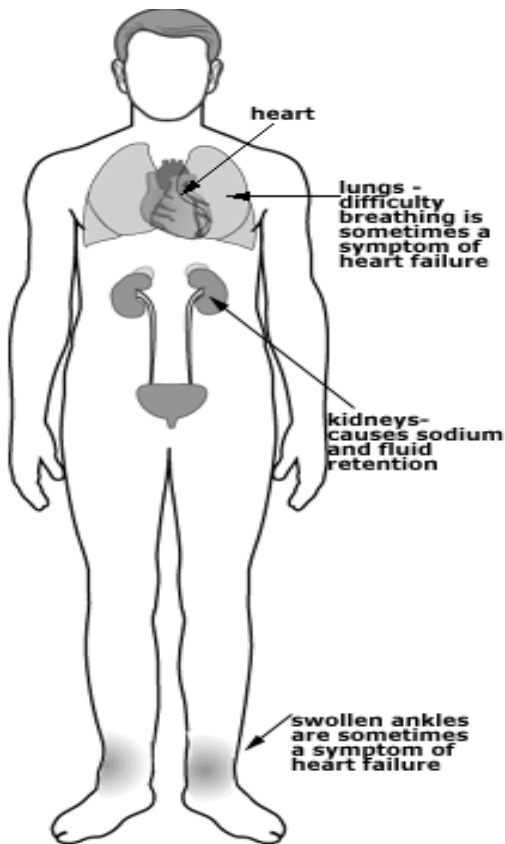


**Plain Language Summary**  
**Abby Murray, MS4**

**Short of breath?**  
**Listening to your heart can help your doctor identify the cause!**

Lots of people come to the clinic because of breathing trouble. This can be caused by a variety of illness or diseases affecting your lungs, heart or some other system in your body. Your doctor will do a full history and physical exam to try to figure out the cause of your trouble. Some things you say may make your doctor more likely to think that your heart is the reason for your difficulties. If your doctor listens to your heart and hears an extra sound, called a “third heart sound” or a “gallop”, he or she will likely order extra tests like blood work or a chest x-ray. These tests may be helpful in confirming that your heart may not be functioning properly. This third heart sound that your doctor heard is a unique sound that suggests heart failure over other causes for your shortness of breath.



**Additional Resources:**

[www.my.clevelandclinic.org/disorders/heart\\_failure/hic\\_heart\\_failure\\_resources.aspx](http://www.my.clevelandclinic.org/disorders/heart_failure/hic_heart_failure_resources.aspx)

[www.heartfailure.org](http://www.heartfailure.org)

[www.nlm.nih.gov/health/health-topics/topics/hf/](http://www.nlm.nih.gov/health/health-topics/topics/hf/)

**Key Words:**

“Heart Failure”

“Third Heart Sound”

“Dyspnea on Exertion”

“Paroxysmal Nocturnal Dyspnea”

“Orthopnea”

“Brain Natriuretic Peptide”

“Edema”

This document was created by a medical student enrolled in the Family Medicine Clerkship at the University of Minnesota Medical School as part of the course project. The aim of the project is to present information on a medical topic in the format of a patient education handout. It does not necessarily reflect the views of the University of Minnesota Medical School physicians and faculty. These materials are provided for informational purposes only and are in no way intended to take the place of the advice and recommendations of your personal health care provider. The information provided may no longer be up-to-date since it has not been reviewed since the date of creation. The information provided should not be used to diagnose a health problem or disease, or as a means of determining treatment. In the event of a medical emergency, immediately contact a doctor or call 911.