



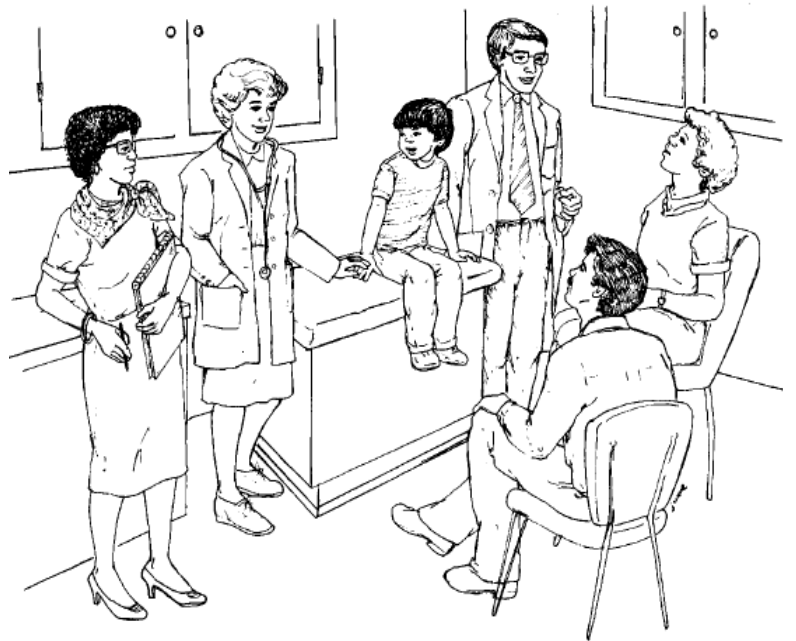
## **Congestive Heart Failure (CHF)**

Congestive heart failure (CHF) happens when the heart does not pump enough blood to the body for normal function and activity. When the heart is not pumping normally, fluid can build up in the lungs. This makes it hard to breathe and makes the heart work harder. Fluid can also build up in the rest of the body. This may make the face, hands, and feet look puffy.

### **Symptoms of CHF**

Your child may have one or more of these symptoms:

- Babies may eat less or take a longer time to eat
- Poor appetite
- Shortness of breath, trouble breathing or fast breathing, especially after eating
- Weakness or tiredness
- Irritability (grouchiness)
- Sudden, unexplained weight loss or gain
- A cough that will not go away
- Faster than usual heartbeat
- Heavy sweating, especially with activity ("activity" for an infant includes eating)



**Picture 1** Members of the health care team are available to answer your questions.

### **Diagnosis**

To find out whether or not your child has CHF, the doctor will examine him or her and will order one or all of these tests:

- Chest X-ray Refer to Helping Hand HH-III-17, *X-ray*.
- EKG (Electrocardiogram) Refer to Helping Hand HH-III-6, *EKG (Electrocardiogram)*.
- Echocardiogram and Doppler Study.

## **Treatment of CHF**

Treatment of CHF is different for each child. Your doctor, nurse, and health care team will decide the best way to help your child recover from CHF. The nurse will also show you how you can help care for your child while he or she is in the hospital. Your child's nurse will also teach you how to care for your child at home.

## **Special Instructions:**

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If you have any questions, be sure to ask your doctor or nurse.