Think Sudden Cardiac Arrest is a Heart Attack? That’s like comparing apples and oranges.

Understanding Your Ejection Fraction (EF)

**EF** is the percentage of blood that is pumped from your heart during each beat.

- **50-75%**
  - Heart’s pumping ability is **NORMAL**

- **36-49%**
  - Heart’s pumping ability is **BELOW NORMAL**

- **35% & Below**
  - Heart’s pumping ability is **LOW**

Checklist

- Should I be concerned with my EF number?
- Do I need to have my EF rechecked? (And when?)
- Is there anything I should do about my EF?
- What else can I do to monitor my heart health?
- Do I need additional tests or treatments?
- Do I need to see another doctor who specializes in heart rhythm?
- When should my EF be checked next?

Patient Name __________________________
Date EF Number , Notes % % % %

▲ Clip and keep this panel to record your EF numbers and medications.

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MEASURING EF
Ejection fraction is usually measured in the left ventricle (LV). This is the heart’s main pumping chamber. A normal LV ejection fraction is 50 to 75 percent. Your EF is usually measured by a test called an echocardiogram, which uses sound waves to produce an image of your heart. If you have heart disease, your EF will be checked periodically. This lets your healthcare provider determine if you have heart failure or other kinds of heart disease.

LIMIT SALT
Limiting sodium, or salt, to 2,000 mg a day is an important part of maintaining a healthy heart and treating heart failure. With a low EF, your kidneys get less blood than they should. This makes them unable to rid the body of excess water and salt. So eating too much salt can lead to even more fluid buildup. It also increases your blood pressure, which makes your already weakened heart work harder.

MANAGE YOUR FLUIDS
With a low EF, blood can back up in your lungs and force fluid into the breathing spaces. The fluid then builds up, making it difficult to breathe. It can also cause weight gain and swelling. Your healthcare provider will tell you the amount of fluids you should have daily depending on your EF.

EXERCISE REGULARLY
Aerobic exercise can help strengthen your heart and improve how well it pumps blood to the rest of the body. All it takes is 30 minutes a day of activity, even if that activity is walking. Just be sure to talk to your healthcare provider about an exercise program that is right for you.

A LOW EF
A low EF number is an early sign of heart failure. This is a condition where the heart doesn’t pump enough blood to the rest of the body. With treatment, many people live well with heart failure. So if you have a low EF, it is important that you recognize the signs of heart failure. They may include: fatigue, shortness of breath, and swelling in the feet. A low EF can also cause irregular heartbeat, which can make your heart stop pumping suddenly.

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CHECKLIST

Here’s a list of questions to ask your doctor or healthcare provider:

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☐ What else can I do to monitor my heart health?

☐ Do I need additional tests or treatments?

☐ Do I need to see another doctor who specializes in heart rhythm?

☐ When should my EF be checked next?

NOTES