About half of people with HF have HF with reduced ejection fraction (HFrEF), or when the heart does not contract with enough force, so less blood is pumped out.¹

6.5 million Americans suffer from HF.²

HF is the most common cause of hospitalization in people over 65.³

50%

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As a mom and a high school art teacher, I was used to always being on the go and caring for my children and students. But when I was diagnosed with heart failure (HF) – a condition where the heart cannot pump enough blood around the body – I knew I needed to start caring for myself, too.¹ My HF diagnosis was unexpected, but with the support of my family and healthcare provider team, I learned all I could about the condition. I want to help others who are living with HF, or are helping care for someone who has HF, feel empowered to manage the condition. That’s why together with my daughter Queen Latifah, I’ve joined the Rise Above Heart Failure initiative. Together, let’s rise above heart failure!

1. BE HONEST ABOUT SYMPTOMS
Before I knew I had HF, I often felt tired and very short of breath. I couldn’t even bend down to tie a shoe and had trouble walking up and down the stairs. I also had a hard time sleeping without lots of pillows propping me up. My family thought these were just common signs of getting older, and did not realize there was a problem with my heart. If you have HF, it’s especially important to track your symptoms and discuss them with your doctor.

2. LEARN AS MUCH AS YOU CAN
I didn’t know much about HF when I was first diagnosed, so I learned as much as I could on how to manage my condition. You can start by visiting RiseAboveHF.org, a one-stop resource on the basics of HF.

3. NO CHANGE IS TOO SMALL
I’ve learned that small diet and lifestyle changes can really add up when it comes to managing my HF. Try replacing your salt shaker with a mixture of some favorite spices. Work with your doctor and other members of your care team to stay as active as you can, even if it’s just walking a few minutes a day. Check out RiseAboveHF.org for more ideas on positive lifestyle changes, including My HF Guide, a new tool to help you manage your HF.

4. DON’T BE AFRAID TO ASK FOR SUPPORT
It’s so important to have support from family, friends and others who are living with HF. My daughter Queen Latifah, together with my entire family, came together to help me manage my HF. Not sure where to start if you don’t have a built-in support system? The American Heart Association Support Network provides valuable tips and advice from other HF survivors, including myself, to help others and ensure you are not alone.

5. SPEAK UP!
By working together and speaking out about this condition, we can all rise above HF. Share your own HF story or words of support at RiseAboveHF.org and on social media using the hashtag #RiseAboveHF.