

# Heart Disease and Social Security Disability

The Social Security Administration (SSA) evaluates heart disease under the cardiovascular system—medical listing 4.00. Heart disease (e.g. chronic heart failure, ischemic heart disease, recurrent arrhythmias, symptomatic congenital heart disease, cardiomyopathy, heart transplant, aneurysm of aorta or major branches, chronic venous insufficiency, peripheral arterial disease) is characterized by any disorder that affects the proper functioning of the heart or the circulatory system (that is, arteries, veins, capillaries, and the lymphatic drainage).

Cardiovascular impairment results from one or more of four consequences of heart disease:

1. Chronic heart failure or ventricular dysfunction.
2. Discomfort or pain due to myocardial ischemia, with or without necrosis of heart muscle.
3. Syncope, or near syncope, due to inadequate cerebral perfusion from any cardiac cause, such as obstruction of flow or disturbance in rhythm or conduction resulting in inadequate cardiac output.
4. Central cyanosis due to right-to-left shunt, reduced oxygen concentration in the arterial blood, or pulmonary vascular disease.

The medical listings describe cardiovascular impairments based on symptoms, signs, laboratory findings, response to a regimen of prescribed treatment, and functional limitations. Various studies such as angiography, echocardiography, electrocardiography (ECG) and exercise tolerance tests (ETT) are used to assess the severity and duration of the heart disease.

For example, an individual with ischemic heart disease who is precluded from performing an exercise tolerance stress test; has a left ventricular dysfunction with a decrease of 10 mm Hg or more in systolic pressure below the baseline blood pressure or the preceding systolic pressure; and has a marked limitation of physical activity would be found to have a listing level impairment.

Age, education, past relevant work experience and limitations of physical/mental condition are also reviewed to determine if an individual may still qualify for disability benefits even if some or all of the criteria of the medical condition do not equal an impairment listing.

*Source: Social Security Administration | [www.ssa.gov](http://www.ssa.gov)*



*Donald with Allsup employee Lori. Donald is an Allsup customer approved in December 2008.*

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