Chronic heart failure: diagnosis

Chronic heart failure suspected

- Take a detailed history and perform a clinical examination
- Perform ECG
  - Consider chest X-ray, blood tests, urinalysis, peak flow or spirometry
- Measure NT-proBNP

NT-proBNP

- > 2,000 ng/l (236 pmol/l) Refer urgently to be seen within 2 weeks
- 400-2,000 ng/l (47-236 pmol/l) Refer urgently to be seen within 6 weeks
- < 400 ng/l (47 pmol/l)

Specialist clinical assessment including transthoracic echocardiography

Heart failure confirmed
- Assess severity, establish aetiology and identify correctable causes

Heart failure not confirmed
- Consider other causes of symptoms with specialist input if concern persists

This is a summary of the recommendations on tests to offer to diagnose chronic heart failure from NICE's guideline on chronic heart failure. The guideline also covers management. See the original guidance at www.nice.org.uk/guidance/NG106