



# Barth Syndrome

## Cardiovascular System

### *Heart Failure*



The term **congestive heart failure** is a condition in which congestion (the build-up of fluid in the lungs or lower limbs). However, this is just one feature of heart failure. Heart failure is a chronic condition characterized by the heart's diminished ability to pump blood effectively. This can occur at any age. People with Barth syndrome are at an increased risk of developing heart failure. Small areas of damage may occur over years, damaged muscle tissue is replaced by scar tissue. The heart compensates for the failure in two ways:

- **By increasing the number of beats** the heart is able to pump more blood out to the body which improves circulation.
- **By enlarging and increasing the thickness of the heart muscle fibers** the heart increases its pumping strength, contracting with greater force to push the blood out to the body.

The heart can compensate for a period of time; however, eventually these compensatory mechanisms actually contribute to the progression of the disease by causing the walls of the heart to enlarge too much.