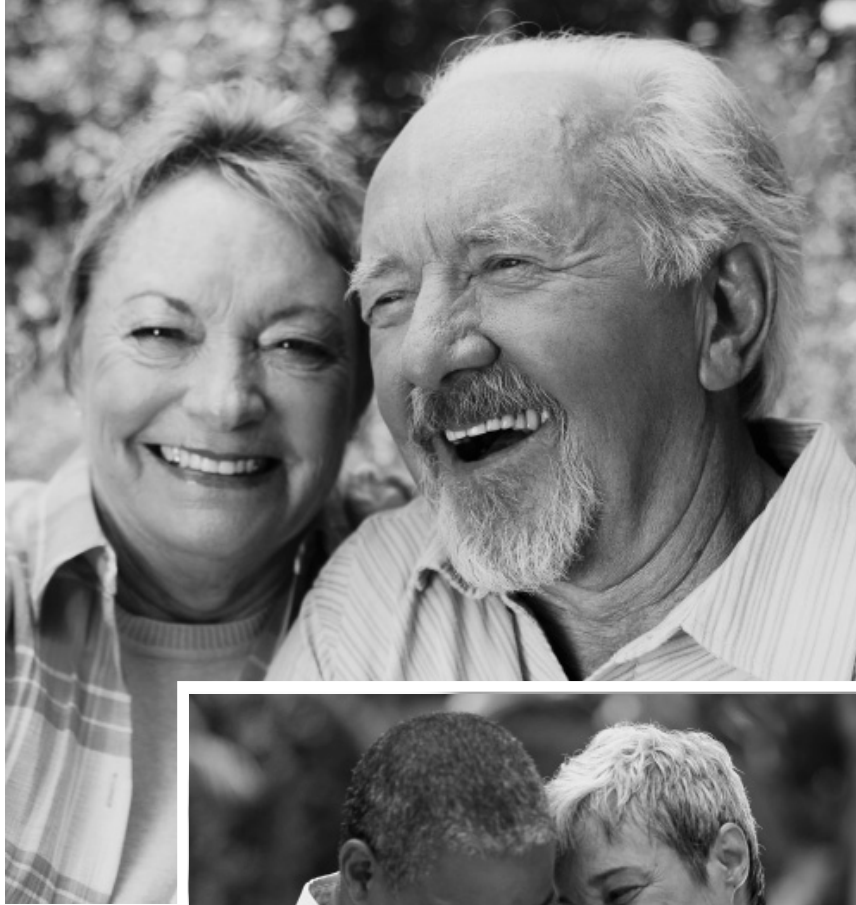

Guide to Management of Heart Failure





Important Phone Numbers

Primary Care Physician: _____

Other practitioner: _____

Care Manager: _____

Advice Nurse: _____

Behavioral Medicine Specialist: _____

Emergency Room: _____

Home Health Nurse: _____

Social Services: _____

Health Education Center: _____

Dietitian: _____

Prescription refill line: _____

Other: _____

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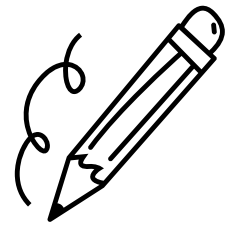
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I. Introduction

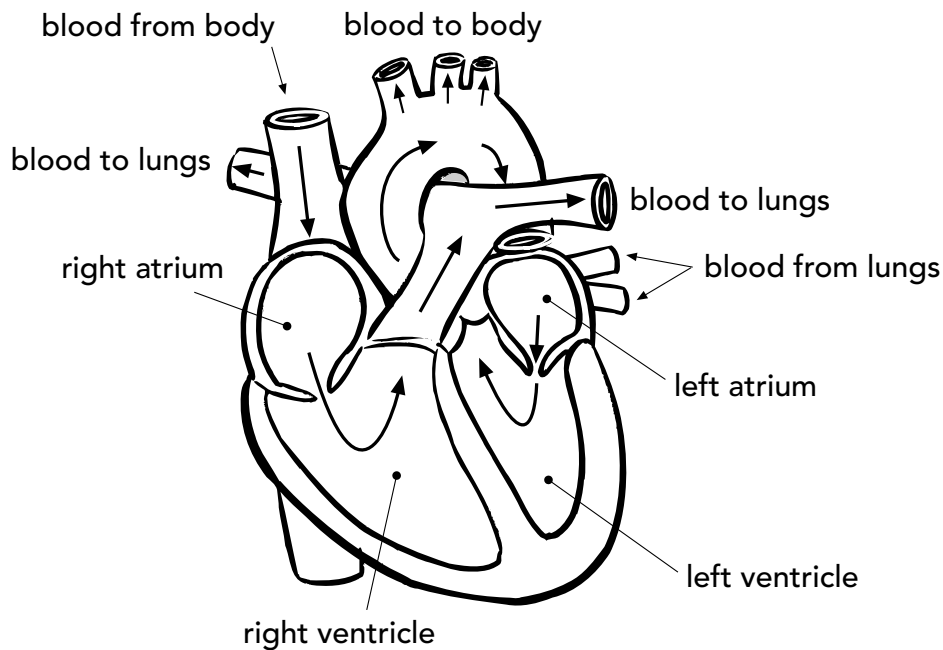
You, your friends, and your loved ones are important partners in your health care. Together with your physician and other health care professionals, you can manage the symptoms of heart failure by learning and practicing the lifestyle steps presented in this booklet.

Write down any questions you have as you read this booklet. Bring your questions to discuss with your physician or health care professional at your next medical office visit.

Questions I have:



II. About Heart Failure



How your heart works

The heart is a pump that sits in the chest behind the breast bone. Normally the heart is a little bigger than a clenched fist. The heart is divided into a right and left side. Each side is further divided into a top and bottom half. Blood from the body enters the top right side of the heart called the right atrium and passes into the lower right side called the right ventricle. Here, the blood is sent to the lungs to pick up oxygen. This oxygen-rich blood returns to the heart at the top left side of the heart and then passes into the lower left part of the heart, the left ventricle. This part of the heart is the strongest, because it pumps oxygen-rich blood to all parts of the body.

What is heart failure?

“Heart failure” **does not** mean that your heart has stopped working or is going to stop. It means that your heart’s pumping ability is weaker than normal; your heart still beats, but with less force.

Heart failure is a group of symptoms. Heart failure can be treated and its symptoms managed, even when the heart cannot be returned to normal.

Working with your physician or other health care professional on a treatment plan, you can manage the symptoms so you can feel better and do the things you like to do.



What causes heart failure?

Heart failure can be caused by one or more of the following:

- high blood pressure
- heart attack or coronary artery disease
- heart valve disease
- diabetes
- drinking too much alcohol for too long
- disease of the heart muscle itself (cardiomyopathy)
- virus
- other diseases
- a combination of the above

What are the signs and symptoms of heart failure?

You may have one or more of the following:

- *Excessive tiredness, fatigue, and weakness*

When your heart is not pumping with enough force, your muscles do not get enough oxygen to meet its needs.

You may:

- be more tired than usual
- not have enough energy for normal activities



- *Shortness of breath*

Sometimes breathing becomes more difficult. You may experience:

- difficulty catching your breath
- frequent/hacking cough
- difficulty lying flat
- waking up at night due to difficulty breathing

- *Weight gain*

A common sign of heart failure is weight gain due to fluid retention. When your body is holding on to extra fluid, your weight will go up. Sometimes this weight gain happens rapidly. In other cases, slow, progressive weight gain occurs.

You may feel:

- swelling sensation in feet and ankles
- shoes and socks too tight
- rings on fingers too tight
- bloated stomach, or tightness at waistline
- shortness of breath



- *Changes in the frequency of urination*



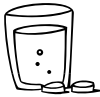

Your kidneys help your body get rid of extra fluid when you urinate. More blood may be pumped to your kidneys at night because your brain and muscles are resting and need less blood. Additional blood to your kidneys allows them to “catch up” during the night while you are at rest.

You may experience:

- less frequent urination during the day
- more frequent urination at night
- decreased urination at all times

III. Lifestyle Steps for Managing Heart Failure Symptoms

Although heart failure is a serious condition, steps to manage the symptoms and lead a full, productive life are:

	Weigh yourself daily and keep records of your weight.
	Eat healthy, low-sodium foods, like fruits, vegetables, and whole grains.
	Get regular physical activity (for example, walking).
	Balance activity and rest. 
	Take medications as prescribed.
	Do not smoke.
	Avoid alcohol.

Weigh yourself daily and keep records of your weight

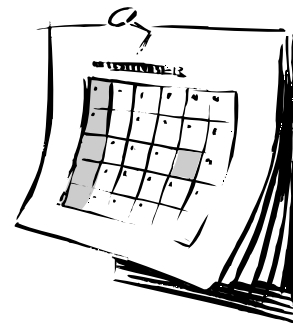
Why should you weigh yourself every day?

Sudden or steady weight gain can be a warning sign that your body is holding on to fluid. This fluid can lead to symptoms such as shortness of breath and swelling of feet, ankles, and abdomen.

How to weigh yourself:



- Weigh at about the same time every day. We suggest weighing every morning, just after waking up (after urinating and before eating).
- Weigh with the same amount of clothing on; or without clothing.
- Use the same scale.
- Check to be sure the scale is set to zero before weighing yourself.
- Make sure the scale is on a hard surface.
- Write your weight on the daily weight log or other record.
- Repeat weighing if you have doubts about the scale or your weight.





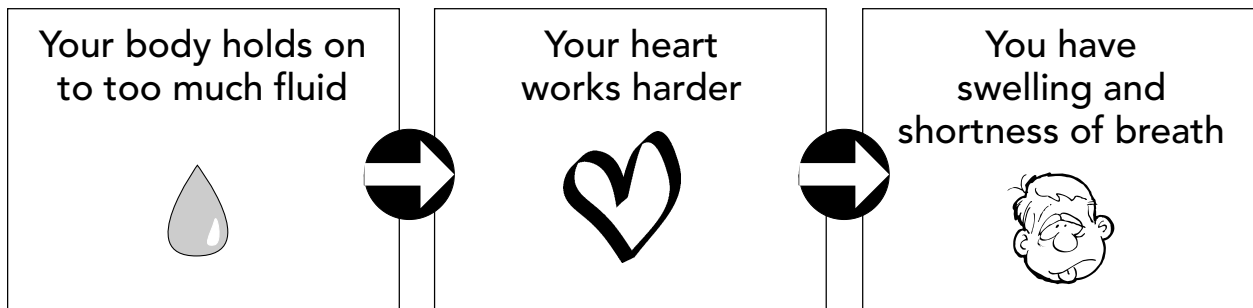
Call your physician or health care professional if you have:

- weight gain of 2 to 3 pounds (or more) in a day
- weight gain of 5 pounds (or more) in 5 days
- shortness of breath

Bring your daily weight log to all your medical appointments.

Eat healthy, low-sodium foods

Sodium is an important mineral that helps regulate fluid levels in your body. Too much sodium makes your body hold on to too much fluid. People with heart failure need to eat less sodium to avoid retaining excess fluid.



We only need about 500 milligrams of sodium per day. However, most people eat 4,000 to 6,000 milligrams of sodium per day.

Sodium is a naturally occurring mineral and is present in most foods in various amounts. Most of the sodium we eat comes from processed foods like luncheon meats, condiments, and canned, jarred or packaged foods (including frozen foods). Ordinary table salt is made up of sodium and chloride. A teaspoon of table salt has about 2,000 milligrams of sodium. Cutting down on processed foods and table salt is a good way to reduce the sodium we get from food.

Cutting down on sodium takes time to get used to, but eventually you will enjoy the natural flavors of food.

How much sodium is OK?

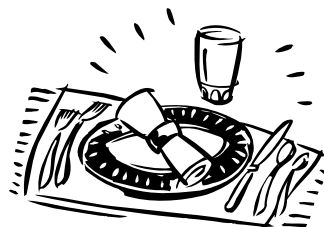
It is important to limit the sodium you eat to 2,000 mg per day. You can do this by limiting the total amount of sodium in each meal or in each serving of food.

In general, limit sodium to approximately:

- 500 mg per meal

Other ways to keep sodium levels below 2,000 mg per day

- Eat mainly fresh foods.
- Read food labels for sodium content.
Choose foods that are 140 mg per serving or less (refer to food label on package for serving size).
- Choose low sodium foods when eating in restaurants.
- Choose restaurants that offer low sodium foods and preparation methods.



Eat mainly fresh or minimally processed foods.

Fresh foods are lower in sodium than processed foods. Fresh fruits and vegetables; whole grains, rice, and noodles; and fresh fish and poultry are good examples of low-sodium foods. It is important to keep these foods low in sodium by not adding salt or salty ingredients (like broth or soy sauce) when preparing these foods.

Healthy, low-sodium preparation tips

- Do not use salt in cooking or at the table.
- Substitute for the flavor of salt by using other seasoning ingredients like onions, garlic, chili, or hot sauce.
- Season foods with pepper, lime or lemon juice, spices, and herbs or herb blends.
- Roasting foods like onions, garlic, and peppers bring out rich flavors. Add these to your recipes.



Read food labels for sodium content.

All packaged foods are required to have a food label with nutrition information. Pay special attention to the amount of sodium in milligrams (mg) but **NOT** the “% Daily Value.”

The food label has three places to look for sodium information:

- the Nutrition Facts panel
- label claims
- the ingredient list

Read the Nutrition Facts panel.

Check the **serving size** on the nutrition facts panel.

Then read the amount of sodium **per serving**.

Plan your portion size by how much sodium is in one serving. Be sure to measure that amount when you serve yourself.

Nutrition Facts	
Serving Size 30g (approx. 1 cup)	
Servings Per Container 10.2	
Amount Per Serving	
Calories 120	Calories from Fat 9
% Daily Value*	
Total Fat 1g	2%
Saturated Fat 0g	0%
Cholesterol 0mg	0%
Sodium 6mg	0%
Total Carbohydrate 25g	8%
Dietary Fiber 2g	8%
Sugars 7g	
Protein 3g	

Limit your sodium to 140 mg per serving. This label from a cereal box shows that the cereal is low in sodium.

Read and understand the label claims.

Statements on the food label may claim that the food is “low in sodium” or “sodium free.” It is important for you to know what the claims mean.

Label claim	What does it mean?
Sodium-free	Less than 5 milligrams per serving
Very low sodium	35 milligrams or less per serving
Low sodium	140 milligrams or less per serving
Reduced sodium	At least 25% less than a comparable food
Light in sodium	50% less sodium than a comparable food

If you choose a food that has a label saying either “low sodium,” “sodium-free,” or “very low sodium,” you know that food fits in with your low sodium plan if you pay attention to serving sizes. If the claim says “light in sodium” or “reduced sodium,” you still need to check the Nutrition Facts panel to find the milligrams of sodium per serving. Some foods, like soy sauce or some canned soups, have labels saying “light” (or “lite”) but are still too high in sodium.

Read the ingredient list.

If you see the word “salt” or “sodium” listed among the first five ingredients, you can be reasonably sure that the food is high in sodium.

This label from a cereal box shows that the cereal is low in sodium because the words “sodium” or “salt” are not among the first five ingredients.

Ingredients: Wheat bran, corn bran, wheat flour, calcium phosphate, sugar, calcium carbonate, (salt), aspartame, sodium ascorbate and ascorbic acid (vitamin C), niacinamide, zinc oxide, reduced iron, pyridoxine hydrochloride (vitamin B₆), riboflavin (vitamin B₂), vitamin A palmitate, and thiamin hydrochloride (vitamin B₁).

Look for these other common ingredients containing sodium:

- monosodium glutamate
- sodium bicarbonate (especially in antacid tablets)
- sodium nitrate
- sodium saccharin
- sodium citrate
- baking soda

Choose low sodium foods when eating in restaurants.




Follow these suggestions for choosing low-sodium foods in restaurants:

- Avoid condiments such as mustard, catsup, pickles, oyster sauce, tartar sauce, barbecue sauce, soy sauce, chili sauce, and fish sauce.
- Request that foods be prepared without added salt.
- Ask for salad dressings and sauces on the side or add very little.
- Order broiled or grilled items prepared without salted dressings, sauces, or marinades.

Choose restaurants that offer low sodium foods and preparation methods.

Call a restaurant ahead of time and ask whether they prepare foods that are low in sodium. Ask if they can handle special requests to use less salt and fewer salty ingredients.



Foods to avoid	Foods to try instead
table salt	salt-free herb mix, fresh or dried herbs, garlic, pepper, lemon, flavored vinegars
processed meat, chicken or fish (for example, hot dogs, bologna, salami, ham, bacon, pastrami, smoked fish)	lean fresh meat, poultry, fish 
American or processed cheese	low-sodium cheese 
regular frozen meals	low-salt frozen meals or meals with less than 500 mg sodium per meal
frozen vegetables in butter or cheese sauce	fresh vegetables, canned or frozen vegetables without salt 
canned soups and vegetables	low-sodium canned soups and vegetables (be sure to check serving sizes and sodium content), homemade soups made without salt
instant hot cereals	regular hot and cold cereals



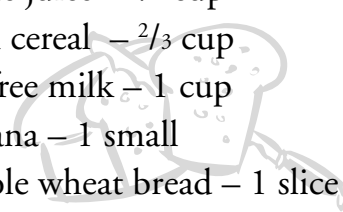
Foods to avoid	Foods to try instead
salted crackers	unsalted pretzels, unsalted rice cakes, unsalted popcorn, graham crackers, low-salt crackers
boxed rice, soup, and noodle mixes	rice, potatoes, noodles, pasta, and beans prepared without salt
most fast foods	pack a sandwich from home (use fresh-baked chicken, turkey or roast beef), with fresh vegetables and fruit
salted snacks like chips, pretzels, crackers, pickles	crisp fresh carrot sticks, radishes, celery, other fresh vegetables
seasoning salt, like onion salt and garlic salt	onion or garlic powder, chopped fresh onion or garlic
monosodium glutamate (MSG)	flavored vinegar, chili sauce
tomato sauce and vegetable juices	fruit juice, tomato paste, low-sodium vegetable juice

Sample Menus

DAY 1

Breakfast

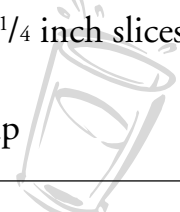
Apple juice – 1/2 cup
 Bran cereal – 2/3 cup
 Fat free milk – 1 cup
 Banana – 1 small
 Whole wheat bread – 1 slice
 Soft margarine – 1 tsp.



Lunch

Chicken sandwich:

Chicken breast, no skin – 3 oz.
 Swiss cheese – 1 oz.
 Whole wheat bread – 2 slices
 Loose leaf lettuce – 2 leaves
 Tomato slices – 2 (1/4 inch slices)
 Carrot slices – 5
 Orange juice – 1/2 cup

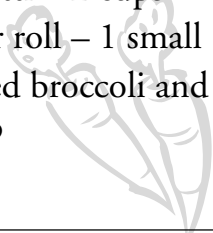


Snack

Apple – 1 medium

Dinner

Fresh tomato sauce – 3/4 cup
 Spaghetti – 2 cups
 Dinner roll – 1 small
 Steamed broccoli and carrots – 1 cup




Snack

Lowfat yogurt – 1 cup
 Strawberries – 1/2 cup

DAY 2

Breakfast

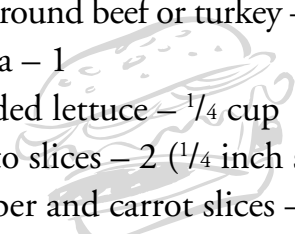
Prune juice – 3/4 cup
 Oatmeal – 1 cup
 Fat free milk – 1 cup
 Banana – 1 medium



Lunch

Soft shell taco:

Lean ground beef or turkey – 3 oz.
 Tortilla – 1
 Shredded lettuce – 1/4 cup
 Tomato slices – 2 (1/4 inch slices)
 Cucumber and carrot slices – 10

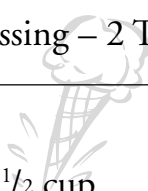


Snack

Orange – 1 medium

Dinner

Baked fish with lemon – 3 oz.
 Steamed rice – 1 cup
 Steamed green beans – 1 cup
 Green salad with sliced tomatoes – 1 1/2 cups
 Oil and vinegar dressing – 2 Tbsp.



Snack

Lowfat ice cream – 1/2 cup



Other suggestions:

- Read over-the-counter medication labels for sodium content. If you buy antacid tablets, choose a sodium-free brand.
- Read labels on all foods; even some fresh turkey and chicken are processed with sodium.

Fresh foods such as fresh fruits and vegetables contain less sodium than processed foods such as deli meats and cheese. Another thing to keep in mind is that fat-free or low-fat foods may be higher in sodium than full-fat foods.

Other nutritional considerations

Many people with heart failure have other medical problems, such as diabetes, high blood pressure or high cholesterol. You may already be following a recommended diet to help you manage these conditions. If not, ask your physician to refer you to a registered dietitian who can help you select foods that are right for you.

Sometimes it is necessary to limit your fluid intake. Check with your physician and follow his or her instructions.

Get regular physical activity

Regular physical activity helps you feel better, enables you to do more, lowers anxiety and stress, and helps control weight and high blood pressure. Talk with your physician or other health care professional before you start an exercise program.



Benefits of physical activity:

- helps keep joints, tendons and ligaments flexible
- increases muscle strength
- improves blood circulation
- helps manage high blood pressure and diabetes
- helps maintain independence and quality of life

Exercise guidelines:

- Start by doing slow, easy warm-up exercises.
- Avoid exercising right after eating a meal. (We recommend waiting 60 minutes before starting.)
- Do not exercise in extreme hot or cold weather.
- You should be able to talk while you exercise. (If you are too short of breath to talk, slow down or stop to rest!)
- Do cool-down exercises and stretches when you finish.

- Rest when you finish; try to elevate your legs for a while.

How often should you exercise?

Exercising on most days of the week is best.

How long should you exercise?

- 30 to 45 minutes (you may need to work up to this slowly). Go at a pace that is comfortable to you.

Good times to rest:

- right after meals
- after a tiring activity
- before a tiring activity



Stop and rest if you experience these symptoms:

- severe shortness of breath
- dizziness
- chest pain or pressure
- nausea
- excessive fatigue



Balance activity with rest

Although it is important to be active, you also need to balance activity with rest.

Some tips for balancing physical activity with rest:

- Do activities in a cool but comfortable temperature.
- Pace yourself – rest between activities throughout the day.
- Keep frequently used items in easy reach.
- Adjust the height of your work areas so they are comfortable and easy to reach.
- Dress your lower body first, then your upper body.
- Avoid activity if you are already tired.
- Have someone help you if you need to.

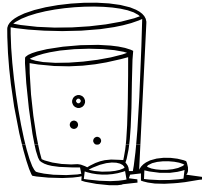


Follow these important guidelines for safe physical activity.

- Do not lift heavy objects; lifting over 10 to 15 pounds is not recommended.
- Do not strain when having a bowel movement. Ask your doctor about a stool softener or laxative if you need one.
- Do not push or pull heavy objects.
- Do not do activities that require you to raise your arms over your head or bend over for an extended period of time.
- Do not do activities that cause you to be short of breath.

Take medications as prescribed

Your physician may prescribe two or more medications to help you manage your heart failure. Taking medications as



prescribed is a very important part of managing heart failure. Below are some examples of medications that are often prescribed.

- *ACE-inhibitors*

Lisinopril (Zestril/Prinivil[®]), Captopril (Capoten[®]).

Taking ACE-inhibitors can help you live longer.

ACE-inhibitors prevent the body from producing chemicals that cause blood vessels to narrow. The blood vessels are more relaxed and the heart doesn't have to work as hard to pump blood. ACE-inhibitors also prevent these chemicals from having other toxic effects on the heart. In this way, ACE-inhibitors preserve the heart's pumping ability.

Most people can take this medication without side effects. Side effects that may occur include:

- cough
- skin rash
- dizziness or lightheadedness when changing position
- altered or decreased sense of taste
- increased amount of potassium in the blood

Be sure to tell your physician or other health care professional if you have any of these or other symptoms.

If you miss a dose, take it as soon as possible after you remember. If it is almost time for your next dose, do not take the missed dose.

If you cannot take ACE-inhibitors, your physician may prescribe a different medication, such as an angiotensin receptor blocker (Losartan, or Cozaar®). Another alternative to ACE-inhibitors includes a combination of nitrate and hydralazine. These medications also allow the heart to pump more easily by relaxing the blood vessels. Your physician or health care professional will work with you to determine what is the best selection of medications for you to take.



DO NOT increase, decrease, or double up on doses unless taught how to do so by your physician or other health care professional.

- *Diuretics*

Diuretics or “water pills” (i.e., furosemide or Lasix[®]) help by reducing the amount of fluid in the body. Your body gets rid of this excess fluid when you urinate. Getting rid of this excess fluid decreases the amount of work your heart needs to do.

Possible side effects of diuretics:

- leg cramps
- dizziness or lightheadedness






Take your last dose of diuretic medication no later than 6:00 p.m. so that you will not need to get up as often at night to urinate.

- *Potassium*

Potassium is a mineral found in most foods. We need a certain amount of potassium to be healthy. Some medications such as diuretics or “water pills” can cause your body to lose potassium. However, other medications may increase potassium levels in your body.

If you need extra potassium, your physician may recommend that you take a potassium supplement or eat more potassium-rich foods. If you take a potassium supplement, you may need to watch your potassium.

The table below gives some suggestions for selecting foods high in potassium. Talk with your physician or other health care professional about your potassium needs.

Foods high in potassium	
	Fruits: Fresh apricots, peaches, bananas, grapefruit, oranges, watermelon, honeydew, cantaloupe, dates, raisins, prunes
	Vegetables: Fresh potatoes, artichokes, carrots, Brussels sprouts, tomatoes, broccoli, mushrooms, sweet potatoes, Swiss chard, winter squash, parsnips
	Legumes and nuts: Dried beans, lentils, peas, peanuts
	Poultry and seafood: Fresh chicken, turkey, scallops
	Dairy: Milk, yogurt

In general, salt substitutes that contain potassium are not recommended unless approved by your physician or other health care professional.

- *Beta blockers*

Like ACE-inhibitors, beta blockers block the toxic effect of some chemicals on the heart. Beta blockers also prevent angina (chest pain); control heart rate and rhythm; and lower blood pressure. They can help your heart pump more easily so that you feel better.

It can take two to three months to get used to a beta blocker. It helps to remember that:

- Early side effects usually go away over time.
- You may need to take a beta blocker for two to three months before it makes you feel better.
- Even when a beta blocker does not make you feel better, it can still help protect your heart from getting weaker.

Possible side effects of beta blockers:

- dizziness
- tiredness
- skin rash

- *Spironolactone*

Spironolactone is prescribed to block the buildup of chemicals that are harmful to the heart. Not all patients with heart failure need spironolactone.

Possible side effects of spironolactone:

- drowsiness
- rash
- abdominal pain
- breast enlargement or pain in men

- *Digoxin*

Digoxin (Lanoxin) helps to slow down or correct your heart rate and may help your heart pump better so that you feel better. You take digoxin at the same time each day.

Very rare side effects to watch out for:

- decreased appetite, nausea, vomiting and diarrhea
- extremely slow heart rate
- unusual, severe tiredness/weakness
- blurred vision or yellow/green/white colors in vision

Call your physician or other health care professional if you experience any of these symptoms.

If you miss a dose:

If you miss a dose of digoxin and remember within 12 hours, then take your missed dose as soon as possible. If you do not remember within 12 hours, skip the missed dose and go back to your regular schedule. **Do not double your dose.**



Precautions while taking digoxin:

- DO NOT stop taking digoxin without checking with your physician.
- Tell other physicians and health care professionals that you are taking digoxin.

Tips for remembering to take medications as prescribed:

- Learn the name, dose, and reason for taking your medications.
- Record and update your regular medication on your medication wallet card.
- Set a regular routine for taking your medications (for example, around mealtime or at bedtime).

- Make a simple chart of your medications and post it in an obvious place.
- Set an alarm clock or your watch to remind you.
- Try using a pillbox to help you organize your daily medications.



Remember:

- Do not let your prescriptions run out; obtain your refill when you have a two-week supply of medication left.
- Never stop taking your medicine, change the dose, or take another medication unless your physician specifically instructs you to do so.
- Keep all medicines out of children's reach.
- Keep your medications properly labeled.
- Store medicines away from heat, direct light, or damp places (such as the bathroom).



If you have a question about your medication, call the pharmacy where you had the prescription filled. Ask to speak to a pharmacist. The label on your prescription lists the telephone number of the pharmacy where your prescription was filled.

Do not take any over-the-counter medication before checking with your physician or other health care professional.

Tips for traveling

Here are some tips for when you are away from home:

- Take your scale and your Daily Weight Log with you.
- Check to see if you have enough medications well before you leave home, including any other medications you may take. Make sure you have enough of your medications with you when you leave home.
- Keep your medications with you. Don't leave them in your luggage if you fly; instead, put them in your carry-on.
- Organize your medications before you leave home. Put a week's supply in a pill organizer to help you stick to your medication routine.
- Bring comfortable clothing and walking shoes with you.
- Take your favorite low-sodium herb blend with you so that you can enjoy foods prepared without salt.



For a healthier life:

- Do not smoke or chew tobacco. If you do smoke, quitting is the most important change you can make to improve your health. If you have not yet made plans to quit, try to think about what would help you quit. Kaiser Permanente has a program to help you quit smoking. For more information, contact your Kaiser Permanente Health Education Department.
- Do not drink alcohol. Alcohol can weaken your heart muscle. Be especially careful to not drink any alcoholic beverages if your heart failure could be caused by alcoholism. Whatever the cause of your heart failure, it is still best not to drink alcohol; if you plan to drink alcohol, limit yourself to one drink per occasion at most.
- Do not use illegal drugs.

AVOID:

- Contact with people who have colds or the flu.

DO:

- Get a flu shot every year.
- Get a pneumonia shot if you have never had one.

When to call your physician or other health care professional

Call your physician or other health care professional if you have any of these new or worsening symptoms:

- shortness of breath
- sudden weight gain – 2 or more pounds in a day or 5 or more pounds in 5 days
- increased swelling of feet, legs, or ankles
- cough that does not go away
- worsening side effects from medications
- heart rate irregularity, chest pain, or heart palpitation



CALL 911 FOR:

- severe shortness of breath
- coughing up pink, frothy sputum
- chest discomfort, pain, or pressure not relieved by rest or nitroglycerin

IV. Managing Emotional Stress

Cope with your feelings

When you have heart failure, you may experience feelings of frustration or fear that you won't be your "same old self." Changes in the way you eat and how physically active you are may make you feel sad or depressed.

Emotional reactions to illness may include:

shock depression

denial acceptance

anger

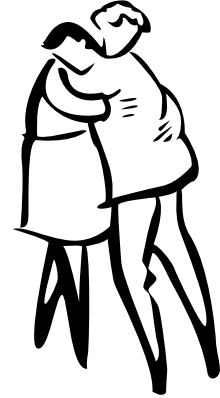
These reactions are normal. It is helpful to talk to your family, friends, and health care professionals about your feelings. Talking helps you and your family and friends to understand and to work through difficult periods.



If you feel overwhelmed by feelings of depression, sadness, or anxiety, be sure to seek support from your health care professional, behavioral medicine specialist, psychologist, social worker, spiritual advisor, or from a professional counselor.

It is normal to have all of these feelings:

- fear of physical dependency
- fear of being a burden to others
- fear of not having enough money
- fear of moving and exerting yourself
- fear of death



While all these emotions are normal responses to illness, sometimes they can become overwhelming. If you have feelings of sadness, guilt, or anxiety more days than not or you have thoughts that life is not worth living, you should contact a psychologist, psychiatrist, or other professional. These feelings can often be effectively managed with counseling and/or medications.

Some physical ways to help you manage emotional tension:

- Try to exercise on most days of the week.
- Balance work and play.
- Try a new hobby.
- Take time off for vacation or entertainment.
- Take time to be alone.
- Learn a relaxation technique (music, imagery, or audiotapes).
- Do things at your own pace.



Some mental ways to help you manage emotional tension:

- Learn to accept what you cannot change.
- Avoid taking on too much. Learn to say no!
- Recognize stressful situations. Prepare yourself for these in advance.
- Take a stress reduction class.
- Join a support group.
- Check with the Health Education Department for classes and groups.



Some emotional and spiritual ways to help you manage emotional tension:

- Be around supportive friends or family.
- Talk about difficult things; express your feelings.
- Be optimistic; enjoy positive emotions such as joy, love, and peace.
- Stop doing/going/being with people who take more from you than they return.

Family and other loved ones are important.

The diagnosis of heart failure can affect your family and your “significant others” as much as it affects you. Your family, friends, and other loved ones are valuable sources of support. Just like you, they need to learn as much as they can about heart failure. It is difficult for them to help you without knowledge of your medical condition and management plan.



Explore ways your family, friends, and other loved ones can be both physically and emotionally helpful to you. It is important for them to know how they can help.

Here are a few ways your family members and other loved ones can help you:

- keep track of medicines
- prepare special meals
- exercise with you
- provide emotional support
- support you in making lifestyle changes
- join a support group with you

V. Preparing for the Unexpected: Advance Directives

An advance directive is a written document that states your wishes concerning the care you want to receive should an emergency or health crisis occur and you cannot speak for yourself.

Talking about these issues is not easy. However, informing others about your desires can help prevent difficult situations and problems for you and your loved ones later.

Consider preparing a Durable Power of Attorney.

A Durable Power of Attorney for Health Care (DPAHC) is an advance directive that lets others know what to do in a medical emergency. It states what life saving measures you desire if you cannot think clearly or speak for yourself.

Advance directives can also take other forms:

- a documented conversation with your physician or health care professional
- instructions for no cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR)
- living wills (not legally recognized in California)

DPAHC arrangements are legally recognized in California and allow you to write down your personal wishes or describe your values about end-of-life care. The DPAHC also allows you to appoint a legal representative to speak for you if you are unable to speak for yourself.

Steps to filling out the DPAHC:

- Choose a person to be your health care agent (spouse, family member, friend, clergyman).
- Discuss your wishes with this person.
- Fill out the DPAHC form.
- Have the completed form witnessed by two people, or have it notarized.
- Send a copy of the completed form to the outpatient medical records department at the medical office you use.
- Discuss the DPAHC form with your physician, and send a copy to all of your physicians and other health care professionals.
- Send a copy of the completed form to your health care agent.
- Keep a copy of the completed form at home.





We encourage everyone to have an advance directive on file and in the medical record. If you do not want to have an advance directive or if you need more explanation about advance directives, ask your physician. Discuss your wishes with your family and health care professional. Your physician or other health care professional can help you understand how these decisions may affect you.

VI. Resources



Low sodium cookbooks

Starke RD, editor, *American Heart Association Low-Salt Cookbook: A Complete Guide to Reducing Sodium and Fat in the Diet*. New York: Times Books; 1995.

Gihleman AL, *Get the Salt Out: 501 Simple Ways to Cut the Salt Out of Any Diet*. New York: Crown Publications; 1997.

Bagg EW, Todd SB, Bagg RE, Bagg SB, *Cooking Without a Grain of Salt*. New York: Bantam Books; 1998.

Williams MS, *Cooking the Fat-Free, Salt-Free, Sugar-Free Flavor-Full Way*. New York: Crossing Press; 1997.

You can also call the Kaiser Permanente Healthphone at **1-800-33-ASK ME (1-800-332-7563)** or sign on to **members.kp.org** to get information and online services.



Web sites

- heartinfo.org/
- heartfailure.org
- chfpatients.com/
- chfpatients.com/rec/recipes.htm



Notes



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The information presented here is not intended to diagnose health problems or to take the place of medical care and information you receive from your physician or health care professional. If you have persistent health problems or if you have further questions, please consult your physician or health care professional.