

# Heart Failure Patient Guide

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# Introduction

Individuals living with heart failure often have the same question: can I still live a normal life? Yes, a normal life is possible, but as any person with a chronic disease, it is critical to learn how to take care of yourself. This booklet will help you learn to successfully manage your heart failure, including understanding how the disease affects your body and the importance of following your treatment plan. By taking control of your health, carefully following medication instructions and making healthy lifestyle changes, you can lead an active and satisfying life!

After reading, you will:

- Understand what having heart failure means.
- Understand the treatment plan given to you by your doctor or nurse.
- Learn how to effectively follow your treatment plan so that you can live longer, feel better and be more active.

## What is Heart Failure?

Many people have a misunderstanding of what heart failure actually means. Heart failure does not mean that your heart has stopped working or that you have had a heart attack. Heart failure means the heart doesn't pump blood through your body as well as it should, and can lead to serious complications like stroke and other potentially fatal conditions.

During heart failure, your heart still beats, but it pumps less nutrient and oxygen-rich blood to the rest of your body. Because of this, heart failure can make you feel weak or tired. Heart failure can also cause swelling and fluid buildup in your feet, legs, belly and even your lungs. Fluid backing up into the lungs is often referred to as "congestion," which is why it is sometimes called "congestive heart failure" or CHF.

## What Causes Heart Failure?

Heart failure usually occurs when another problem makes the heart weak or stiff causing it not to pump or fill normally. Coronary artery disease is the most common cause of heart failure. Other causes include high blood pressure, sleep apnea, obesity, diabetes, lung disease, alcohol abuse, infection of the heart muscle and damaged heart valves. Sometimes the exact cause of heart failure is unknown.

Ask your doctor what has caused your heart failure. There may be special things you can do to take care of yourself, based on the specific reasons for your heart failure.

The cause of my heart failure is:

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Specific things I can do for myself:

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# How Does it Feel to Have Heart Failure?

People with heart failure often have the following symptoms:

- Shortness of breath that increases with normal activity
- Sudden weight gain
- Swollen feet, ankles, legs or hands
- Feeling of fullness or bloating in your abdomen (belly)
- Frequent dry, hacking cough
- Difficulty breathing when lying flat
- Increased weakness or fatigue
- Loss of appetite or nausea
- Increased heart rate or heart palpitations
- Dizziness or light-headedness

## Heart Failure Zones

Just because symptoms are common does not mean you should ignore them. Monitor your symptoms according to this chart and take action as necessary.

### ALL CLEAR—THIS ZONE IS MY GOAL.

- Symptoms are under control.
- No shortness of breath.
- No weight gain\* of more than two pounds in 24 hours.
- No swelling in feet, ankles, legs or belly.
- No chest pain.

### CAUTION—THIS ZONE IS A WARNING.

I should call my doctor or home health nurse if I have:

- Weight gain\* of three or more pounds in a day or five or more pounds in a week.
- Increased shortness of breath with normal activity.
- Difficulty breathing when lying down, using more than two pillows or having to sit up to breathe.
- Increased swelling in feet, ankles, legs or belly.
- Increased weakness or feeling more tired than normal.
- Frequent dry, hacking cough.
- Dizziness or light-headedness even when getting up slowly.
- Uneasy feeling, as if something is not right.
- Persistent nausea or loss of appetite.
- Decrease in urinary output.

### EMERGENCY!

**Call 911 immediately if you have any of the following symptoms:**

- Struggling to breathe. Persistent shortness of breath while sitting still.
- Prolonged chest pain unrelieved with rest or nitroglycerin.
- Confusion or inability to think clearly.
- Sudden and prolonged dizziness or light-headedness.
- Extremely rapid or irregular pulse or a feeling of fluttering in your chest (palpitations).

\* Weight gain could mean you are retaining fluid and heading for trouble. If you detect fluid build-up of three pounds or less early, it can often be treated at home. If you detect it later, you are more likely to develop worsening symptoms and may need to be in the hospital for treatment.

# Take Care of Yourself

The treatment of heart failure typically involves several steps. Follow these tips to live a healthy, active life with heart failure.

- Walk daily, as tolerated. Rest between activities.
- Take prescription and non-prescription medications as directed.
- Eat a low-sodium diet as directed by your physician.
- Follow fluid restrictions as directed by your physician.
- Don't smoke and avoid secondhand smoke.
- Avoid alcohol consumption.
- Keep appointments with your doctors.
- Know the signs/symptoms of heart failure, like:
  - Check for swelling in feet, ankles, legs and belly.
  - Monitor for an increase in weight.

## WEIGH YOURSELF DAILY

Sudden weight gain is a sign that you could be retaining fluid. Record your weight every day in the pink 12-month weight log provided. Notify your doctor or Home Health Nurse if you gain three or more pounds in one day or five or more pounds in a week.

Keep your weight log near your scales and take your weight log with you when you visit your doctor.

*Using the same scales every day, weigh yourself:*

- When you first get up in the morning, after you urinate
- Before you get dressed
- Before you eat or drink

## CHECKING YOUR PULSE

Pulse is the rhythmic expansion and contraction of an artery that happens when blood is pumped by the heart. It is important to learn how to monitor your pulse at home. The most common location to check your pulse is at the wrist. The radial artery is located in the wrist crease, on the thumb-side. The average resting pulse for adults is 60-85 beats per minute. It is recommended that heart failure patients have a resting pulse of less than 70 beats per minute. Checking your pulse before getting up in the morning will determine your resting pulse.

**STEP 1:** Rest for five minutes (either a sitting or lying position).

**STEP 2:** Locate your pulse by gently placing the tips of your index and middle fingers over the radial artery and then press gently. Once you find the pulse, use a watch or clock with a second hand and count the number of beats felt for 30 seconds. Do not use the thumb because it has its own pulse that may be felt.

**STEP 3:** Double the number of beats counted to determine your pulse. This is the number of times that the heart beats in a minute.

**STEP 4:** Make note if the pulse is a regular rhythm, unsteady rhythm or has extra beats.

**STEP 5:** Contact your doctor if the pulse rate is higher or lower than the range recommended by your doctor. Seek immediate care or call 911 if you feel dizzy or lightheaded, or feel like you are going to faint.

# Taking Your Medicine As Directed

Most people with heart failure require several medications to effectively manage their disease. It is extremely important to take your medicine exactly as prescribed even if you begin to feel better.

Some over-the-counter medicines can make heart failure worse. If you have headaches, muscle pain or some other problem for which you need relief, consult your doctor before taking any pain reliever or anti-inflammatory drug (examples: ibuprofen, Advil, Motrin and Naprosyn). Also, some over-the-counter medications are high in sodium, which can cause fluid retention (examples: Alka-Seltzer, Vicks cough syrup, Fleets enema). Read every label before using the product. Always consult a medical provider if you are unsure or have questions.

Talk to your doctor before you take any non-prescription supplements or herbal remedies that claim to help your heart. These products can affect the way your medications work.

If you are taking all of your medications and begin to feel worse, be sure to notify your doctor or Home Health Nurse. You might be feeling worse from your heart failure, another illness or you could be experiencing side effects from your medicines. ***Never stop taking your medications without notifying your doctor.***

## HELPFUL HINTS FOR REMEMBERING YOUR MEDICATIONS

- Establish a daily routine for taking your medications.
- Use a medication checklist or worksheet to record when you take your medicine.
- Pack your medications in pill boxes to help you remember to take them.

# Heart Failure Medications

It is important to know the names of your medications, how they work, how much to take and when to take them. It is helpful to keep a list of your medications with you. The following is a list of commonly-prescribed medications for heart failure patients. Depending on your condition, your doctor may recommend other medications not included on this list. **Always talk to your doctor before using any over-the-counter (OTC) medications or supplements.**

## ACE INHIBITORS:

Controls high blood pressure and helps prevent heart attacks. They block the effects of harmful stress hormones, which are substances produced by your body that make heart failure worse.

**Examples of ACE Inhibitors:** Capoten (Captopril), Vasotec (Enalapril), Zestril (Lisinopril), Lotensin (Benazepril), Altace (Ramipril), Monopril (Fosopril)

## ANGIOTENSIN RECEPTOR BLOCKERS OR ARBS:

Controls high blood pressure and helps prevent heart attacks. They block the effects of harmful stress hormones, and may be prescribed for people who can not tolerate ACE Inhibitors.

**Examples of ARBs:** Diovan (Valsartan), Avapro (Irbesartan), Cozaar (Losartan), Micardis (Telmisartan), Benicar (Omesartan)

## ANGIOTENSIN RECEPTOR NEPHROLYSIN INHIBITOR (ARNI):

Improves heart function. It blocks the effects of harmful stress hormones. This medication is prescribed for people with a new diagnosis of heart failure. Your cardiologist may switch you to ARNI if you are currently on an ACEI/ARB depending on your heart function.

**Example of ARNI:** Sacubitril/Valsartan (Entresto)

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### **BETA BLOCKERS:**

Decreases blood pressure, helps regulate heart rhythm and may strengthen your heart's pumping action.

**Examples of Beta Blockers:** Toprol XL (Metoprolol succinate), Coreg (Carvedilol), Zebeta (Bisoprolol)

### **DIURETICS (WATER PILLS):**

Removes excess sodium (salt) and water from your body. When sodium and water are eliminated, there is less fluid for your heart to pump and the heart does not have to work as hard.

**Examples of Diuretics:** Lasix (Furosemide), Demadex, Bumex, Zaroxolyn, Aldactone (Spironolactone), Diuril, Hydrochlorothiazide (HCTZ)

### **HYDRALAZINE AND ISOSORBIDE DINITRATE**

This combination is used to control high blood pressure and may also be used to treat heart failure. If you are African American or have reduced kidney function, your heart doctor may recommend this combination.

### **SODIUM-GLUCOSE CO-TRANSPORTER-2 INHIBITORS (SGLT2)**

Used to treat heart failure and diabetes. If you have both heart failure and diabetes, talk to your provider.

**Examples of SGLT2 Inhibitors:** Jardiance (empagliflozin), Farxiga (dapagliflozin)

## **Changes to Your Diet**

Making some changes to your diet can help reduce your symptoms. Here are a few points to help you with your diet:

- Reduce your sodium intake to 1500 mg sodium. Remember, eating too much sodium causes you to retain fluid.
- Table salt is a common source of sodium and one you can control. One teaspoon of salt contains 2300 mg of sodium.
- Season your foods with fresh herbs and spices or salt-free seasoning blends instead of salt.
- Buy fresh or frozen vegetables or “No Salt Added” canned vegetables instead of regular canned varieties or vegetables with sauces.
- Avoid condiments with high salt intake such as soy sauce, ketchup and barbecue sauces.
- Avoid buying packaged foods especially frozen prepared dinners, deli meat, canned soups and hot dogs.
- Choose oil and vinegar for your salad instead of prepared salad dressings. Even low-fat versions may be high in sodium.

## **Sodium**

Sodium is a mineral that is found naturally in foods in very low amounts. The average American eats between 4,000 and 6,000 mg of sodium a day. Our bodies need about 800 mg of sodium every day to stay healthy. Most people with heart failure are restricted to 1500 mg of sodium a day.

We often use the words “sodium” and “salt” to mean the same thing, but salt is not pure sodium; it is 40 percent sodium and 60 percent chloride. The sodium that is naturally in foods and the sodium added at the table makes up about one-fourth of the sodium we get each day. The remaining three-fourths come from processed foods. Even if a food doesn't taste salty, it may contain sodium. It's important that you read the food label for the “hidden” sodium in foods.

Remember, the taste for sodium/salt is acquired. You weren't born with a love for salt. If you're used to eating salty foods, you will think food needs to be salty to taste good. Your taste buds will change. It will take one to two months for you to get used to the natural taste of foods.

# Tips for Lowering Sodium in Your Diet

- Remove the salt shaker from the table. Don't add salt to foods at the table or use it in cooking.
- Eat fresh fruits and vegetables. Regular canned vegetables and frozen vegetables with sauces are high in sodium. "No Salt Added" canned or plain frozen vegetables are okay.
- Eat fresh meats, poultry and seafood. Avoid deli meats, bacon, sausage and canned meats.
- Avoid foods that are pickled, brined, cooked in broth or soaked in brine. For example, ham, bacon, sausage, pickles, sauerkraut, etc.
- Avoid processed foods such as canned soups and vegetables, packaged rice mixes, instant mashed potatoes, instant hot cereals and frozen entrees.
- Avoid high sodium condiments, dressings and sauces such as bottled salad dressings, teriyaki sauce, soy sauce, barbecue sauce, ketchup and Worcestershire sauce.
- Avoid commercially-made muffins, biscuits and stuffing mixes.
- Read food labels for sodium content. Remember the amount of sodium listed on the food label relates to the serving size listed and not just the portion you decide to eat at a particular sitting.
- Limit sodium intake to 150 mg or less for single food items or 500 mg per meal. Read the food label to help keep track of sodium intake.
- Use seasonings like lemon juice, herbs and spices and salt-free seasonings such as Mrs. Dash or others labeled salt-free. Some lemon-pepper seasoning, hot sauces, marinades and meat and seafood seasonings contain salt.
- Eat out less often. Choose restaurants that are willing to prepare your foods without added salt. Many fast foods and other restaurant foods contain hidden sodium.

## Seasoning Without Salt

Use this guide, organized by dish, for suggestions on what salt-free or low-salt seasoning to use in your cooking.

### SOUPS, STEWS AND CASSEROLES

Chili powder, lemon juice, lime juice, onion powder, pepper or hot sauce

### BEEF

Allspice, basil, celery seeds, chili powder, curry, fennel, garlic, garlic powder, ginger, lemon juice, onion, oregano, parsley, rosemary, sage, savory, tarragon, thyme

### FISH/POULTRY

Basil, bay, celery seeds, cinnamon, cumin, curry, ginger, lemon, mustard powder, onion, oregano, paprika, rosemary, sage, sesame seeds, savory, tarragon, thyme

### LAMB

Allspice, basil, dill, fennel, garlic, ginger, mint, oregano, parsley, sage, savory, tarragon or thyme

### FRUIT:

Cinnamon, lemon juice, cloves, nutmeg

### VEGETABLES

- **Asparagus:** marjoram
- **Beans:** basil, caraway, dill, garlic, sesame seeds, thyme
- **Broccoli:** marjoram oregano, lemon, vinegar
- **Brussels sprouts:** marjoram oregano
- **Cabbage:** dill, garlic powder, vinegar
- **Cauliflower:** dill, garlic powder
- **Eggplant:** basil, marjoram oregano, sage, thyme
- **Greens:** lemon, marjoram, sage, thyme, vinegar
- **Peas:** basil, marjoram, pepper, rosemary, sage
- **Potatoes:** bay, caraway, celery seeds, chives, garlic powder, paprika
- **Squash:** basil, marjoram, sage, thyme
- **Turnips:** basil, marjoram, pepper

# Tips for Using Herbs and Spices

There are many herb and spice blends available in the grocery store. You can make your own creations using the herbs and spices you like best. Sample the new flavors by adding a small amount to your food. You can always add more.

- Check with your health care provider before using “lite” salt.
- Select salt-free herb blends.
- Be aware of seasoned salts and meat rubs. These are high in sodium.
- Try “liquid smoke” instead of using cured meat to season food. It provides a smoky flavor without the salt. It’s available in the spice aisle of your grocery store.
- Use dried herbs and spices within a year of purchase for maximum flavor. To check for freshness, rub seasonings between your fingers and smell the aroma. If there’s not a strong aroma, replace with a fresh bottle.

## Recipes

### MAKE YOUR OWN SALT SUBSTITUTE

- 1 teaspoon chili powder
- 1 tablespoon garlic powder
- 2 tablespoons dry mustard
- 6 tablespoons onion powder
- 2 teaspoons ground oregano
- 3 tablespoons paprika
- 2 teaspoons black pepper
- 1 tablespoon poultry seasoning

Mix seasoning together and put in your salt shaker.

### MEXICAN BLEND

- 1/4 cup chili powder
- 1 tablespoon cumin
- 1 tablespoon onion powder
- 1 teaspoon dried oregano
- 1 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1 teaspoon red pepper
- 1/2 teaspoon cinnamon

Combine ingredients and store in an airtight container.

Use in chili, tacos, chicken, beef and pork.

### MIXED HERB BLEND

- 1/4 cup dried parsley
- 2 tablespoons dried tarragon
- 1 tablespoon dried oregano
- 1 tablespoon dill weed
- 1 tablespoon celery flakes

Combine ingredients and store in an airtight container. Use for steamed vegetables, salads or fish.



# 1500 mg Sodium Diet

While a low-sodium diet may sound overwhelming, understanding how to make the best choices can simplify your healthier choices. Use this table to understand some common low-sodium substitutes.

FOOD GROUPS	LOW-SODIUM FOODS	HIGH-SODIUM FOODS
Milk and Milk Products Limit to 2 cups daily	Any milk: whole, low-fat, skim, chocolate, yogurt, eggnog, cocoa	Buttermilk, malted milk, milkshakes
Vegetables	Fresh, frozen or “No Salt Added” canned vegetables, low-sodium or salt-free vegetable juices	Regular canned vegetables, sauerkraut, pickled vegetables, frozen vegetables in sauce, regular vegetable or tomato juices
Fruits	All fruits and fruit juices	None
Breads & Cereals	Enriched white, wheat, rye and pumpernickel bread, hard dinner rolls, cooked cereal without salt, low-sodium dry cereals, unsalted crackers and breadsticks	Breads and rolls with salted tops, Instant hot cereals, dry cereals with more than 240 mg of sodium per serving, crackers with salted tops, regular bread crumbs or cracker crumbs
Bread, Muffin & Baking Mixes	Homemade muffins, pancakes or waffles made with low- sodium baking powder, homemade or low-sodium bread crumbs	Quick bread or instant mixes, canned and fast food biscuits, check the food label on frozen biscuits
Potatoes, Rice, Pasta & Stuffing	White or sweet potatoes, enriched rice, barley, noodles, spaghetti, macaroni and pastas	Potato casserole mixes, Instant rice and pasta mixes, commercial casserole mixes, commercial stuffing
Meats	Any fresh, fresh-frozen, unbreaded meats: beef, lamb, pork, veal and game	Any meat, fish or poultry that is pickled, smoked, cured, salted or canned: bacon, chipped beef, canned beef, cold cuts, ham, hot dogs, sausages, pickled meats, pickled eggs, frozen entree with more than 350 mg, frozen meal with more than 500 mg
Poultry	Any fresh or fresh-frozen, unbreaded poultry: chicken, turkey, Cornish hen and others	Smoked or breaded chicken, cold cuts
Fish & Shellfish	Any fresh or fresh-frozen, unbreaded fish and shellfish	Sardines, anchovies, marinated herring, crab substitutions

# 1500 mg Sodium Diet

FOOD GROUPS	LOW-SODIUM FOODS	HIGH-SODIUM FOODS
Eggs, cheese, peanut butter	Eggs, lower sodium cheese, lower sodium peanut butter, dried peas and beans (not canned)	Regular hard and processed cheese, cheese spreads, cream cheese, ricotta cheese, regular peanut butter, canned beans
Fats	Unsalted butter or margarine, unsalted salad dressings, vegetable oils or shortenings, mayonnaise-type salad dressings, light, heavy and sour cream	Salted butter or margarine, regular salad dressings, bacon fat, salt pork, snack dips made with cheese, bacon, buttermilk or instant soup mixes
Soups	Homemade soups made with low sodium broth and appropriate seasonings	Regular bouillon, broth or consommé, regular canned or dehydrated soups
Sweets & Desserts	Limit sweets to 1 small serving a day. Desserts made from milk should be within milk allowance	Instant pudding mix
Beverages	All beverages Limit milk to 2 cups a day	Sports drinks
Snack Items	Unsalted nuts, seeds, pretzels, popcorn & potato chips	Salted nuts, seeds, pretzels, popcorn & potato chips
Salt, Seasonings & Flavorings	Use salt substitute only with doctor's approval, pepper, herbs, spices, sodium-free flavorings, vinegar, lemon or lime juice, salt-free seasoning mixes	Salt, garlic salt, celery salt, onion salt, lemon-pepper with salt added, seasoned salt, any seasoning containing salt or sodium compounds, monosodium glutamate (Accent)
Condiments	Small amount of ketchup and mustard, fresh-ground horseradish, Tabasco sauce, choose low sodium varieties when available	Chili sauce & pickles, gravy or sauce mixes, kitchen bouquet, barbecue sauce, soy, teriyaki sauce, worcestershire or steak sauce

# Eating Out

Eating a meal at a restaurant is still possible for individuals with heart failure. Here are a few pointers on how to order:

- Look for baked, broiled, grilled or steamed foods rather than fried or breaded foods.
- Avoid eating French fries, onion rings and fried or breaded vegetables. Instead, ask for raw or steamed vegetables. If you order a baked potato, order it without butter or sour cream.
- Avoid buttery crusted breads, rolls and salty crackers.
- Order salad with the dressing on the side.

# Fluids

Your doctor will determine if and how much your fluid intake should be limited. As a general guideline, six to eight cups of fluid per day is recommended. Any food that melts at room temperature is considered a fluid. Fluids include:

- Water
- Tea & coffee
- Milk
- Soft drinks
- Fruit juices
- Soups & broths
- Gelatin desserts
- Frozen yogurt & popsicles
- Ice cream & sherbet

Below is a table to help measure your daily fluid allowance:

CUPS	OUNCES	CUBIC CENTIMETERS
1 cup	8 ounces	240 cc
3/4 cup	6 ounces	180 cc
1/2 cup	4 ounces	120 cc
1 tbsp	1/2 ounces	15 cc
n/a	1 fluid ounce	30 cc

# Food Labels

Always check the nutrition labels when choosing food.

## CHECK THE SERVING SIZE.

The serving size may be less than the amount you are likely to eat. If you would usually eat more than 1 serving, multiply the number of nutrients by the number of servings you plan to eat.

## CHECK THE AMOUNT OF SODIUM IN EACH SERVING.

Choose foods with no more than 150 mg sodium per serving. For entrée foods and frozen entrées such as chicken, seafood, lasagna, choose items with no more than 350 mg sodium per serving. For an entire meal, choose items with less than 500 mg sodium per serving.

Remember: No more than 1500 mg sodium per day or as directed by your physician.

### Single Serving Guide:

- < 150 mg Sodium = Eat and enjoy!
- 150-300 mg Sodium = Eat in Moderation
- >300 mg Sodium = Avoid

## CHECK THE INGREDIENTS LIST FOR SALT OR SODIUM.

Any of the words listed below will tell you the food has salt or sodium in it:

- Salt or sodium
- Monosodium glutamate (MSG)
- Sodium bicarbonate
- Sodium phosphate
- Baking soda
- Pickled or brine
- Cured or smoked
- Sodium caseinate
- Sodium ascorbate
- Sodium stearoyl lactylate

<b>Nutrition Facts</b>			
Serving Size 1 cup (245 g)			
Servings Per Container 2			
<b>Amount Per Serving</b>			
<b>Calories</b> 120		Calories from Fat 30	
<b>% Daily Value</b>			
<b>Total Fat</b> 3.5 g		5%	
Saturated Fat .5 g		3%	
Trans Fat 0 g			
Cholesterol 0 mg		0%	
<b>Sodium</b> 950 mg		40%	
<b>Total Carbohydrate</b> 18 g		6%	
Dietary Fiber 0 g		0%	
Sugars 2 g			
<b>Protein</b> 3 g			
Vitamin A 30%		Vitamin C 0%	
Calcium 4%		Iron 8%	
% Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet. Your daily values may be higher or lower, depending on your calorie needs.			
	<b>Calories</b>	2,000	2,500
<b>Total Fat</b>	Less than	65 g	80 g
Sat Fat	Less than	20 g	25 g
<b>Cholesterol</b>	Less than	300 mg	300 mg
<b>Sodium</b>	Less than	2,400 mg	2,400 mg
<b>Total Carbohydrate</b>	Less than	300 mg	375 g
Fiber	Less than	25 g	30 g
INGREDIENTS: potatoes, cabbage, carrots, red bell peppers, peas, onions, green beans, tomato paste, diced tomatoes, egg white solids, water, <b>baking soda</b> , <b>salt</b> , sugar, leeks, <b>garlic salt</b> , soybean oil, modified food starch yeast extract, wheat flour.			

# Exercising

Exercising is recommended for most people who have heart failure. Exercising will not make your heart failure go away but it does strengthen your muscles and helps improve the blood flow through your body.

Here are some tips about exercise and activity:

- Watch the weather. Try not to exercise or participate in outdoor activities if it is too cold (<40 degrees), hot (>80 degrees) or humid.
- Involve your friends or family in your activities. If they are involved, you will be more likely to stick with the activity.
- Don't overdo it! Keep in mind that you may not be able to do as much as you once did. Set realistic goals and take periodic rest breaks.
- If you experience any of the following symptoms, immediately stop exercising and rest:
  - Tiredness
  - Have a rapid pulse
  - Chest pain
  - Unusual shortness of breath
  - Excessive sweating
  - Irregular or slow heartbeat
  - Palpitations (fluttering feeling in your chest)

If you have any of the above symptoms and they do not go away, contact your health care provider.

# Living with Heart Failure

When someone is diagnosed with chronic disease, such as heart failure, they will most likely want to know how it will affect daily life and if it will shorten life. The doctor may not be able to answer those questions exactly because heart failure symptoms have up and down times. It is hard to know just what will happen at any certain time.

It is still important to ask the doctor about your prognosis and inform family members what may happen. Symptoms and treatment plans change over time as heart failure worsens. You can expect to have many talks with your doctor over time as you or your loved one's condition changes. Talking about the future and what may happen is easier if you are asking at every office visit "Does this change what I can expect?"

## POTENTIAL QUESTIONS:

- What kinds of complications or difficulties are possible?
- How long do people with Heart Failure usually live?
- What kind of treatments may be needed along the way?
- What is the worse I might have to face?

## WHAT KIND OF DECISIONS MIGHT YOU FACE?

It is important to think about medical choices you might have to make in the future. Each person's values and beliefs should guide medical decisions and for that to happen we have to talk about them ahead of time.

# Common Feelings About Heart Failure

It is not unusual to feel depressed or anxious when you are told you or a loved one has a chronic disease. Often those feeling go away with time, but sometimes they do not. If you feel depressed or anxious for more than two weeks, you need to take steps to manage these feelings.

## SYMPTOMS OF DEPRESSION

- Down mood
- Irritability
- Loss of interest in things you used to enjoy
- Withdrawal from others
- Excessive sleeping
- Feeling hopeless
- Feeling worthless or guilty
- Fixation with death
- Symptoms of anxiety
- Fear
- Tension
- Restlessness
- Feeling shaky
- Too much worrying
- Always on edge

You may be unsure about sharing these feelings, but they are important to recognize and treat. They can make a difference in your quality of every day life. There are support programs you can join. Your doctor also needs to know about these feelings.

# Advance Directives

Advance Directives allow you to give instructions about your future medical care. It's your right to refuse or accept treatment. Advance Directives protect this right if you are unable to make decisions on your own. Different types of Advance Directives are:

## HEALTH CARE POWER OF ATTORNEY (HCPOA)

A health care power of attorney lets someone you have chosen make all health care decisions for you if you are unable to make the decision for yourself. If you have a living will, that person has the authority to interpret your living will in the event there are questions about it and make decisions they believe are in your best interest. It is up to you to decide if your HCPOA can override your living will.

## LIVING WILL

A living will is a legal document that lets you share your wishes about treatment to sustain your life. It lets health care providers know what limits you want to set about mechanical breathing, CPR, nutrition and fluids. State laws differ in their requirements for living wills, so if you already have one from another state, it is recommended that you make sure it can be honored. If you have a HCPOA, you decide if this person can override your living will.

## DO-NOT-RESUSCITATE ORDER

This is an order that tells the health care provider what to do if you stop breathing or your heart stops beating. It includes details about what you do or do not want done if there is a life-threatening event.

# Important Telephone Numbers

Primary Care Provider: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Cardiologist: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Pharmacy: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Health: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

CaroMont Regional Medical Center ..... 704.834.2000

Cardiac Rehab ..... 704.671.7930

Quit Line NC..... 800.784.8669

Other Contact Numbers: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

If you are having a medical emergency, call 911.

# Next Follow-Up Schedule

Primary Care Provider: \_\_\_\_\_

Cardiologist: \_\_\_\_\_

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Questions for my Doctor:

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## Heart Failure Resources

### **PATIENT EDUCATION WEBSITE**

[www.aahfnpatienteducation.com](http://www.aahfnpatienteducation.com)

### **HEART FAILURE SOCIETY OF AMERICA**

[www.hfsa.org](http://www.hfsa.org)

### **AMERICAN HEART ASSOCIATION**

[heart.org/en/health-topics/heart-failure](http://heart.org/en/health-topics/heart-failure)



## CaroMont Regional Medical Center Heart Failure Program Portable Patient Profile

The purpose of this form is to aid in identifying you and your medical history to other healthcare providers or an ambulance crew, rescue squad, fire or police department who might have to enter your home in an emergency situation when you can not communicate information vital to your health and safety. If you are brought to a hospital, this valuable information will also be extremely helpful to Emergency Department physicians who treat you.

**General:**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Birth Date \_\_\_\_\_ SS #: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Male: \_\_\_\_\_ Female: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_ Primary Language: \_\_\_\_\_

**In case of Emergency, Notify:** \_\_\_\_\_ Current Functional Status (Ambulation, etc.): \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Relationship: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

**Allergies:** Please list any drug, food, substances to which you have had an allergic or bad reaction.


**Health Information:**

Primary Care Physician: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Do you have an Advance Directive? \_\_\_\_\_ Location: \_\_\_\_\_

What hospital do you prefer to use? \_\_\_\_\_ Blood Type: \_\_\_\_\_

What is your current insurance? \_\_\_\_\_ Insurance Number: \_\_\_\_\_

I have never smoked. Yes No I currently smoke packs per day. I have smoked for years.

Do you use other forms of tobacco? Yes No Do you use illicit drugs? Yes No Do you drink alcohol? Yes No

How often/how much? How often/how much? How often/how much?

I formerly smoked but stopped in: (list year) \_\_\_\_\_

**Medical / Surgical History:**

Illness or Operation	Date	Illness or Operation	Date
1)		7)	
2)		8)	
3)		9)	
4)		10)	
5)		11)	
6)		12)	

Do you have a pacemaker or Defibrillator? Yes No Model Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Do you have an artificial eye? Yes No Right Left \_\_\_\_\_

Do you wear contact lens? Yes No \_\_\_\_\_

Do you wear dentures? Yes No Upper Lower Both Partial plate \_\_\_\_\_

Do you have a hearing impairment? Yes No Right Left Both \_\_\_\_\_

Do you have a history of emotional problems? Yes No \_\_\_\_\_

**Have you ever been treated for:**

Anemia	Yes	No	Epilepsy	Yes	No	Liver Disease	Yes	No
Arthritis	Yes	No	Glaucoma	Yes	No	Leukemia	Yes	No
Asthma	Yes	No	Heart disease	Yes	No	Lung disease	Yes	No
Alcohol problems	Yes	No	Heart Murmur	Yes	No	Lupus	Yes	No
Bleeding Tendency	Yes	No	Hepatitis	Yes	No	Rheumatic Fever	Yes	No
Cancer	Yes	No	High blood pressure	Yes	No	Stroke/TIA	Yes	No
Congenital Heart condition	Yes	No	High cholesterol	Yes	No	Tuberculosis (TB)	Yes	No
Depression	Yes	No	Jaundice	Yes	No	Thyroid disease	Yes	No
Diabetes	Yes	No	Kidney disease	Yes	No	Ulcers	Yes	No

Other health problems: \_\_\_\_\_

**Spiritual Information:**

Would you like your Minister / Priest / Rabbi / Other to be notified? (Circle One)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

**CURRENT MEDICATIONS:**

Please list any prescription medications, over the counter medications, vitamins, herbs or nutritional supplements that you are now taking. Please include the dosage amount and the times a day you take them. Please include any drug sensitivities.

Medications Name:	Dosage:	Times a Day:
1)		
2)		
3)		
4)		
5)		
6)		
7)		
8)		
9)		
10)		
11)		
12)		
13)		
14)		
15)		
16)		
17)		
18)		
19)		
20)		
21)		
22)		
23)		
24)		
25)		
26)		
27)		
28)		
29)		
30)		

**Other Physicians involved in my care:**

Name:	Telephone:	Specialty:

**Comments:**
