



Patient Health Guide: Heart Failure

How can YOU stay healthy and out of the hospital?

- **Take your medicines as instructed by your doctor.**
This is very important. Tell your doctor or pharmacist if:
 - You cannot pay for your medicine;
 - You have trouble taking your medicine;
 - Your medicine makes you feel worse; or
 - You are worried about the possible side effects of your medicine.
- **Weigh yourself every day, and write it down. Tell your doctor if you do not have a scale at home.**
- **Eat low-salt food** that you and your heart care team agree is best for you.
- If you smoke, quitting will make you healthier. If you do not smoke, do not start. Avoid being in the same room with other smokers.
- Follow the plan you developed with your doctor for what to do if you gain weight in a short time period, eat a high-salt meal, or experience other concerns discussed during your hospital visit.

What is Heart Failure?

- Heart failure, also called Congestive Heart Failure or CHF, is a medical problem where the heart does not pump enough blood to the rest of the body. The heart is still working, but it is not pumping as well as it should be to effectively deliver oxygen- and nutrient-rich blood to the rest of the body.
- As a result, fluid can build up in the body, causing shortness of breath and swelling in the legs, feet and lungs.
- The goal is to reduce your symptoms and slow progression of the disease.

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Your Symptoms

Understand **how** you are feeling and **what to do based on the Green, Yellow, and Red Zones below**. Ask questions to better understand how to manage your **heart failure** condition.

Green Zone Symptoms:	“All Clear” Green Zone Means:
<input type="checkbox"/> No shortness of breath <input type="checkbox"/> No swelling <input type="checkbox"/> No weight gain <input type="checkbox"/> No chest pain <input type="checkbox"/> No problems or changes with activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Your symptoms are under control • Continue taking your medicines • Weigh yourself every day and write it down • Follow a low-salt diet • Keep all appointments with your doctor even if you feel well
Yellow Zone Symptoms:	“Caution” Yellow Zone Means:
<input type="checkbox"/> Weight gain of 3 or more pounds in one day <input type="checkbox"/> Increased cough <input type="checkbox"/> Increased swelling <input type="checkbox"/> Increased shortness of breath with activity <input type="checkbox"/> Increase in the number of pillows needed <input type="checkbox"/> Anything else unusual that bothers you related to CHF	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Call your doctor to be seen as soon as possible • Your medicines may need to be changed
Red Zone Symptoms:	“Medical Alert” Red Zone Means:
<input type="checkbox"/> Shortness of breath while at rest <input type="checkbox"/> Chest pain that will not go away <input type="checkbox"/> Wheezing or chest tightness while at rest <input type="checkbox"/> Need to sit in a chair to sleep <input type="checkbox"/> Weight gain or loss of more than 5 pounds in 2 days <input type="checkbox"/> Confusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You need immediate or urgent evaluation • Call 911 or have someone drive you to the Emergency Room

NOTES

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Common Medicines Used to Treat Heart Failure

Medicine Type and Reason for Use	Examples	Possible Side Effects
Angiotensin Converting Enzyme (ACE) inhibitor Lowers blood pressure by relaxing blood vessels	<input type="checkbox"/> Benazepril (Lotensin®) <input type="checkbox"/> Captopril (Capoten®) <input type="checkbox"/> Enalapril (Vasotec®) <input type="checkbox"/> Lisinopril (Prinivil® or Zestril®) <input type="checkbox"/> Quinapril (Accupril®) <input type="checkbox"/> Ramipril (Altace®) <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased potassium • Decreased kidney function • Cough • Dizziness • Rash • Swelling <p>Seek immediate medical help if you have swelling of tongue, lips, or face</p>
Angiotensin Receptor Blocker (ARB) Lowers blood pressure by relaxing blood vessels	<input type="checkbox"/> Candesartan (Atacand®) <input type="checkbox"/> Losartan (Cozaar®) <input type="checkbox"/> Valsartan (Diovan®) <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased potassium • Decreased kidney function • Dizziness
Aldosterone inhibitor Helps keep fluid off the heart and prevents unwanted heart remodeling	<input type="checkbox"/> Eplerenone (Inspra®) <input type="checkbox"/> Spironolactone (Aldactone®) <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased potassium • Dizziness • Upset stomach
Beta blocker Reduces the workload on the heart	<input type="checkbox"/> Bisoprolol (Zebeta®) <input type="checkbox"/> Carvedilol (Coreg®) <input type="checkbox"/> Metoprolol succinate (Toprol XL®) <input type="checkbox"/> Metoprolol tartrate (Lopressor®) <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decreased blood pressure • Decreased heart rate • Fatigue • Dizziness
Diuretics (“Fluid Pills”) Helps keep unwanted fluid off the heart	<input type="checkbox"/> Bumetanide (Bumex®) <input type="checkbox"/> Furosemide (Lasix®) <input type="checkbox"/> Torsemide (Demadex®) <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dizziness • Too much fluid loss • Increased urination
Digoxin Helps strengthen the heart and makes it beat stronger	<input type="checkbox"/> Digoxin (Digitek® or Lanoxin®) <p>Note: Blood level monitoring required with Digoxin</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nausea • Vomiting • Blurred Vision • Dizziness

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