



A GUIDE TO

Heart Failure



WELCOME

Welcome to the UPMC Heart and Vascular Institute and thank you for trusting us with your care. While heart failure cannot be cured, there are many steps you can take to live a full life. This book will give you more details about those steps and include helpful tips. You should bring this book and your heart failure calendar with you to all your doctor appointments. Ask your care team for a heart failure calendar if you do not have one. Please let us know if you have any questions or concerns. We promise to always give you the best care possible.

The information in this book can help you to better understand the following:

- Medicines you need to take
- What heart failure zones are
- The amount of weight gain you need to report to your care team
- How much sodium you can have and foods to avoid
- How much fluid you can drink
- Activities you can do with heart failure
- When and who to call for help

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The Heart

Your heart pumps blood to your body through blood vessels. Blood carries oxygen and other important nutrients that your body needs to stay healthy and work properly.

Your heart is a muscle that has 4 sections, called chambers or ventricles, with pieces of tissue, called valves between each chamber. The valves allow the blood to flow one way, stopping it from flowing backward.

- The chambers on the right side of your heart collect blood from your body that has used up the oxygen and pumps the blood to your lungs, where it picks up oxygen and gets rid of waste gases like carbon dioxide.
- The chambers on the left side of your heart collect oxygen-rich blood from your lungs and pumps it back into your body.

Your heart has an electrical system that controls how fast your heart beats. The electrical system sends signals to the heart chambers that cause it to regularly squeeze (pump blood out) and relax.

Your doctor or other care team members can tell you how well your heart is pumping. When they talk about the heart pumping, they are talking about the left ventricle, which is the heart's main pumping chamber. This is referred to as an ejection fraction (EF). An EF is the amount of blood (given as a percent) pumped out of the left ventricle each time the heart beats. The heart does not pump all the blood out of the chamber when it beats. A normal EF is 50 to 70%. Any number in this range is a normal or "good" pump. When the EF is less than 40%, the risk for heart problems is greater.

Heart Failure

Heart failure means that your heart muscle is weak and may not pump as much blood as your body needs. Failure does not mean that your heart has stopped; it means that your heart is not pumping as well as it should.

Since your heart cannot pump well, your body tries to make up for it. To do this:

- Your body holds on to salt and water, which increases the amount of blood in your bloodstream and may cause swelling.
- Your heart may beat faster.
- Your heart may get bigger.

Your body has an amazing ability to adapt to a weak heart (heart failure). At first, you may not know you have the disease, but at some point, your heart and body will no longer be able to keep up. Fluid will start to build up in your lungs and other parts of your body. This fluid buildup is called congestion. This is why some doctors call the disease congestive heart failure, or CHF.

Heart failure is a lifelong disease. Treatment may be able to slow the disease and help you feel better, but without treatments, heart failure usually gets worse over time. There are many steps you can take to feel better and stay healthy longer. Your care team will help you to stay as healthy as possible.

Scan the QR code to watch *"Heart Failure: What Is It?"*



Types of Heart Failure

Heart failure with reduced ejection fraction (HFrEF) and heart failure with preserved ejection fraction (HFpEF) are 2 common types of heart failure.

Heart failure with reduced ejection fraction (HFrEF) happens when the main pumping chamber of the heart (the left ventricle) loses its ability to pump blood out.

Heart failure with preserved ejection fraction (HFpEF) happens when the heart becomes too stiff or too thick to relax and fill properly.

When the heart cannot pump enough blood to meet the body's needs, it tries to make up for this by:

- **Enlarging** (stretching) to pump more blood out
- **Thickening** to increase the muscle mass so it can pump better
- **Pumping faster** so more blood can be pumped out

The kidneys also hold onto more salt and water to increase the blood's volume, but over time this extra fluid can make symptoms worse. It is important to have regular checkups with your doctor because heart failure will continue to get worse over time.

Causes of Heart Failure

There are many health problems that can contribute to heart failure, such as:

- Coronary artery disease (CAD) or a heart attack
- Atherosclerotic vascular disease (happens when plaque [layers of fat] builds up inside the arteries)
- Abnormal heart valves or abnormal heart rhythm
- Infection of the heart muscle
- High blood pressure
- Obesity
- Diabetes
- Severe lung disease
- Thyroid dysfunction
- Alcohol and/or drug abuse
- Certain prescribed medicines (such as chemotherapy)
- Family history/genetics

Your doctor can help you to manage any conditions you may have and help to slow heart failure.

Symptoms of Heart Failure

Heart failure can lead to other health problems, such as heart rhythm problems. Over time, your treatment options may change, especially as your symptoms get worse.

Symptoms of heart failure start to happen when your heart cannot pump enough blood to the rest of your body. In the early stages of heart failure, you may:

- Get tired easily
- Be short of breath when you are active
- Feel like your heart is pounding or racing (palpitations)
- Feel weak or dizzy

As heart failure gets worse, fluid starts to build up in your lungs and other parts of your body. This may cause you to:

- Feel short of breath, even when resting
- Have swelling, especially in your legs, ankles, and feet
- Gain weight (This may happen over 1 or 2 days, or more slowly.)
- Cough or wheeze, especially when you lie down
- Feel bloated or sick to your stomach
- Feel full after eating only a small amount of food

Heart failure can get worse quickly. If this happens, you will need emergency care. After treatment, your symptoms may improve for a long time.

Treatment for Heart Failure

Heart failure is treated with medicines, a healthy lifestyle, and the steps you take to check your symptoms. Treatment can slow the disease, help you feel better, and help keep you out of the hospital. Treatment may also help you live longer.

- You will take several medicines.
- You will learn about a heart-healthy lifestyle that includes eating healthy foods, limiting sodium, getting regular exercise, and not smoking or using tobacco products.
- You may have appointments with nurse experts and/or nurse navigators so they can help you learn self-management skills. They can also monitor how you are feeling.
- Regularly watch for changes in your symptoms, and let your doctor know if you notice any changes.
- Cardiac rehabilitation can give you exercises, education, and support that will help you to stay as healthy as possible.
- Your doctor may recommend a device such as a pacemaker or implantable cardioverter-defibrillator (ICD) to help you manage heart failure.
- As heart failure gets worse, your doctor may talk with you about other options such as a ventricular assist device (VAD) or a heart transplant.
- You may choose palliative care to help improve your quality of life.

Living With Heart Failure

There are many steps you can take to feel better, stay active, and enjoy life when you have heart failure. Some important steps include:

- Taking your medicines
- Keeping track of your symptoms
- Following a low-sodium diet
- Limiting your fluid intake
- Staying active
- Not smoking or using tobacco products

Take Your Medicines

There are many different medicines that your doctor might prescribe to help you to control your heart failure. Each patient is different, so your doctor will prescribe the medicines that are best for you.

These medicines can help to:

- Control the symptoms of heart failure (by helping the heart pump better).
- Keep you out of the hospital.
- Improve your chance of living longer with heart failure.

Continue taking these medicines exactly as prescribed by your doctor, even if you are feeling better. These medicines can cause side effects. If you think any of your medicines are causing side effects, talk with your doctor or pharmacist.

Your medicines may change after each doctor appointment or when you are in the hospital. Keeping an up-to-date list of your medicines (prescription, over the counter, and herbal supplements) is very important. Be sure to share this list with all of your providers and your pharmacist, and bring it to all of your appointments.

If you cannot afford your medicines, please tell a member of your care team as soon as possible. See the charts on the following pages for more medicine information.

Scan the QR code to watch *“Heart Failure: Medicines to Avoid.”*



continued>

Type of Medicine	What It Does	Possible Side Effects	Common Drug Names
Angiotensin Converting Enzyme (ACE) Inhibitor OR Angiotensin Receptor Blocker (ARB) OR Angiotensin Receptor-Nepriylisin Inhibitor (ARNi) Only one of these should be taken. Name: _____	These medicines lower blood pressure and make it easier for the heart to pump blood.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Low blood pressure (dizziness or light-headedness) Dry cough High potassium levels Urinating less often Swelling of mouth, lips, tongue 	ACE Inhibitors <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Benazepril (Lotensin®) Captopril (Capoten®) Enalapril (Vasotec®) Fosinopril (Monopril®) Lisinopril (Prinivil®, Zestril®) Ramipril (Altace®) Quinapril (Accupril®) ARBs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Candesartan (Atacand®) Irbesartan (Avapro®) Losartan (Cozaar®) Valsartan (Diovan®) ARNis <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sacubitril/valsartan (Entresto®)
Aldosterone Receptor Antagonist Name: _____	Aldosterone Receptor Antagonists help the kidneys get rid of extra fluid and lower blood pressure.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> High potassium levels Urinating less often Breast changes (men and women) Changes in the menstrual cycle (women) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Spironolactone (Aldactone®) Eplerenone (Inspra®)
Sodium-Glucose Co-Transporter 2 (SGLT2) Inhibitor Name: _____	SGLT2 inhibitors help prevent the body from holding onto extra fluid (fluid retention) and improve heart function.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Urinating more often Thirst or dry mouth Dehydration Urinary tract infection (UTI) Genital yeast infection 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dapagliflozin (Farxiga®) Empagliflozin (Jardiance®)
Beta Blocker Name: _____	Beta Blockers lower blood pressure and heart rate and may strengthen the heart's pumping ability over time.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Low blood pressure (dizziness or light-headedness) Low heart rate Tiredness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bisoprolol (Zebeta®) Carvedilol (Coreg®, Coreg CR®) Metoprolol (Toprol XL®)

Type of Medicine	What It Does	Possible Side Effects	Common Drug Names
Diuretic (water pill) Name: _____	Diuretics reduce swelling by helping the kidneys get rid of extra fluid. They also help prevent fluid buildup in the lungs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Urinating more often Thirst or dry mouth Dehydration Muscle cramps Low blood pressure (dizziness or light-headedness) Gout symptoms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bumetanide (Bumex®) Furosemide (Lasix®) Hydrochlorothiazide (HydroDiuril) Metolazone (Zaroxolyn®) Torsemide (Demadex®)
Digoxin Name: _____	Digoxin increases the strength of the heartbeat and slows heart rate. They can be used in people with irregular heart rhythms, such as atrial fibrillation (Afib).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nausea and/or vomiting Upset stomach Loss of appetite Blurred or yellow-tinted vision Tiredness or weakness If the drug level is too high, could cause changes in heart rate or rhythm 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Digoxin (Lanoxin®)
Hydralazine and Nitrates (Isosorbide) Name: _____	These medicines lower blood pressure by helping the blood vessels open and relax.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Low blood pressure (dizziness or light-headedness) Fast heart rate Headache Nausea Flushing Swelling in the legs Rash (due to hydralazine) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hydralazine (Apresoline®) Isosorbide mononitrate (Imdur®, Ismo®, Monoket®) Isosorbide dinitrate (Isordil®)
Other			

Monitor Your Symptoms

Heart Failure Zones

Heart failure zones give you an easy way to see changes in your heart failure symptoms. They also tell you when you need to get help. Check every day to see which zone you are in.



Red Zone: This is an emergency. Call 911.

You have symptoms of sudden heart failure. For example, you:

- Have severe trouble breathing, even at rest
- Cough up pink, foamy mucus
- Have a new irregular or fast heartbeat
- Passed out (lost consciousness)
- Have confusion and cannot think clearly

You have symptoms of a heart attack. These may include:

- Chest pain or pressure or a strange feeling in the chest
- Sweating
- Shortness of breath
- Nausea or vomiting
- Pain, pressure, or a strange feeling in the back, neck, jaw, or upper belly, or in one or both shoulders or arms
- Light-headedness or sudden weakness
- A fast or irregular heartbeat

If you have symptoms of a heart attack: After you call **911**, the operator may tell you to chew 1 adult-strength or 2 to 4 low-dose aspirin. Wait for an ambulance. Do not try to drive yourself.



Yellow Zone: Your symptoms are changing. Be careful and call your doctor.

- You have new or increased shortness of breath.
- You are dizzy or light-headed, or you feel like you may faint.
- You have sudden weight gain, such as 2 pounds or more in a day or 5 pounds or more in a week. (Your doctor may suggest a different range of weight gain for you.)
- You have increased swelling in your legs, ankles, feet, and/or stomach.
- You are so tired or weak that you cannot do your usual activities.
- You are not sleeping well, shortness of breath wakes you up at night, or you need extra pillows.



Green Zone: You are doing well. This is where you want to be.

- Your weight is stable. It is not going up or down.
- You can breathe easily.
- You are sleeping well. You can lie flat, with your normal number of pillows, without having shortness of breath.
- You can do your usual activities

Weigh Yourself

You should weigh yourself every day. Heart failure can cause your body to hold onto fluid and salt, which can cause you to gain weight. Weighing yourself every day is very important and can help you to better manage heart failure. Weigh yourself every morning at about the same time. Be sure to place the scale on a flat, hard surface. Weigh yourself every day:

- Wearing the same amount of clothing
- Using the same scale
- After urinating
- Before eating and drinking

Your doctor or your heart failure action plan will tell you how much weight gain to watch out for and what to do.

Scan the QR code to watch *“Heart Failure: Checking Your Weight Daily.”*



Heart Failure Calendar

Use the calendar your care team gives you to keep track of your weight and record which zone you are in each day. Circle red, yellow, or green to reflect how you are feeling. Share this with your provider at your appointments. Ask a member of your care team if you do not have a heart failure calendar.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 weight: _____	2 weight: _____	3 weight: _____	4 weight: _____	5 weight: _____	6 weight: _____	7 weight: _____
8 weight: _____	9 weight: _____	10 weight: _____	11 weight: _____	12 weight: _____	13 weight: _____	14 weight: _____
15 weight: _____	16 weight: _____	17 weight: _____	18 weight: _____	19 weight: _____	20 weight: _____	21 weight: _____
22 weight: _____	23 weight: _____	24 weight: _____	25 weight: _____	26 weight: _____	27 weight: _____	28 weight: _____
29 weight: _____	30 weight: _____	31 weight: _____				

DECEMBER 2022

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
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4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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FEBRUARY 2023

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12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28				

FEELING INDICATOR

● GOOD DAY
 ● BAD DAY
 ● WORSE DAY

X Check the color that indicates how you are feeling each day.



Follow a Low-Sodium Diet

Sodium (salt) causes your body to hold on to extra water. This may cause your heart failure symptoms to get worse. Limiting sodium may help you feel better. People get most of their sodium from processed foods. Fast food and restaurant meals also tend to be very high in sodium. Your doctor may suggest that you limit sodium.

- Have no more than 2,000 mg of sodium each day from food and drink or as prescribed by your doctor.
- It is good to choose foods with no more than 140 mg of sodium per serving. Foods with more than 300 mg of sodium per serving may not fit into a reduced-sodium meal plan.

Scan the QR code to watch *“Heart Failure: Limiting Sodium.”*



Read Food Labels

- Read food labels on cans and food packages. The labels tell you how much sodium is in each serving. Make sure you look at the serving size. If you eat more than the serving size, you have eaten more sodium than is listed for 1 serving.
- Food labels also tell you the Percent Daily Value (DV) for sodium. Choose products with low Percent Daily Values for sodium.
- Be aware that sodium can come in forms other than salt, including monosodium glutamate (MSG), sodium citrate, and sodium bicarbonate (baking soda). MSG is often added to Asian food. When you are eating out, ask for food without MSG or salt.

Important: Many over-the-counter medicines have sodium in them. Make sure you read the labels or ask your pharmacist about the sodium content.

The label information is based on the serving size listed here. For this product, it is 3 ounces.

The amount of sodium in a 3 ounce serving is 650 milligrams, or 28 percent of the recommended daily intake.

The Daily Value, or recommended intake for sodium, is 2,400 milligrams or less. This is a reasonable total for most people, but too high for those with heart failure or high blood pressure.

Those with heart failure should have less than 2,000 mg of sodium per day.

Nutrition Facts	
Serving Size 3 oz. (85g)	
Serving Per Container 2	
Amount Per Serving	
Calories	200
Calories from Fat 120	
% Daily Value*	
Total Fat	15g 20 %
Saturated Fat	5g 28 %
Trans Fat	3g
Cholesterol	30mg 10 %
Sodium	650mg 28 %
Total Carbohydrate	30g 10 %
Dietary Fiber	0g 0 %
Sugars	5g
Protein	5g
Vitamin A	5%
Calcium	15%
Vitamin C	2%
Iron	5%

*Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet. Your Daily Values may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs.

	Calories	2,000	2,500
Total Fat	Less than	65g	80g
Sat Fat	Less than	20g	25g
Cholesterol	Less than	300mg	300mg
Sodium	Less than	2,400mg	2,400mg
Total Carbohydrate		300mg	375mg
Dietary Fiber		25g	30g

Scan the QR code to watch *“Reading a Food Label.”*



Buy Low-Sodium Foods

- Buy foods that are labeled “unsalted” (no salt added), “sodium-free” (less than 5 mg of sodium per serving), or “low-sodium” (140 mg or less of sodium per serving). A food labeled “light sodium” has less than half of the full-sodium version of that food. Foods labeled “reduced sodium” may still have too much sodium.
- Buy fresh vegetables or plain, frozen vegetables. Buy low-sodium versions of canned vegetables, soups, and other canned goods.
- When purchasing convenient foods, buy low-sodium ones. Choose frozen dinners with less than 300 mg per serving.

Prepare Low-Sodium Meals

- Use less salt each day when cooking. Reducing salt in this way will help you adjust to the taste. Do not add salt after cooking.
- Flavor your food with garlic, lemon juice, onion, vinegar, herbs, and spices instead of salt. Do not use soy sauce, steak sauce, onion salt, garlic salt, or ketchup on your food.
- Make your own salad dressings, sauces, and ketchup without adding salt.
- Use less salt (or none) when recipes call for it. You can often use half the salt a recipe calls for without losing flavor. Other dishes like rice, pasta, and grains do not need added salt.
- Rinse canned vegetables. This removes some (not all) of the salt.
- Avoid water that has a naturally high-sodium content or that has been treated with water softeners, which add sodium. If you buy bottled water read the label, and choose a sodium-free brand.

Avoid high-sodium foods, such as:

- Smoked, cured, salted, and canned meat, fish, and poultry
- Ham, bacon, hot dogs, and lunch meats
- Regular, hard, and processed cheese
- Regular peanut butter
- Crackers with salted tops
- Frozen prepared meals
- Canned and dried soups, broths, and bouillon, unless labeled sodium-free or low-sodium
- Canned vegetables, unless labeled sodium-free or low-sodium
- Salted snack foods such as chips and pretzels
- French fries, pizza, tacos, and other fast foods
- Pickles, olives, ketchup, and other condiments, especially soy sauce, unless labeled sodium-free or low-sodium

Tips for Eating Out

- Ask for your order to be prepared without added salt or MSG.
- The heart symbol found on the menu at some restaurants may mean the item is low-fat and/or low in cholesterol. These items may often be higher in sodium. When choosing a low-fat, low-cholesterol meal in a restaurant, ask for it to be served with as little salt content as possible.
- Order baked, broiled, grilled, or steamed foods without sauces, butter, breading, and gravies.
- Ask for salad dressings, sauces, and gravy on the side.
- Avoid soups, broths, salted crackers or rolls, pickles, cheese, olives, seasoned croutons, and cured meats.

Recommended Foods

• Bread/Cereal/Rice/Pasta

- > Bread/rolls without salted tops
- > Muffins
- > Most ready-to-eat and cooked cereal
- > Unsalted crackers and breadsticks
- > Low-sodium or homemade breadcrumbs and stuffing

• Vegetables

- > Most fresh, frozen, and low-sodium canned vegetables
- > Low-sodium and salt-free vegetable juices

• Fruits

- > Most fresh, frozen, and canned fruits
- > All fruit juices

• Milk/Yogurt/Cheese

- > All milk, but limit to a total of 2 cups per day
- > All yogurts
- > Most low-sodium cheeses including low-sodium ricotta, low-sodium cream cheese, low-sodium cottage cheese, and Swiss cheese

• Meats/Poultry/Fish/Dry Beans and Peas/Eggs/Nuts

- > Any fresh or frozen beef, lamb, pork, poultry, and fish (including some shellfish)
- > Eggs and egg substitutes
- > Low-sodium peanut butter
- > Dry peas and beans

• Fats/Snacks/Sweets/Condiments/Beverages

- > Low-sodium or unsalted versions of butter, margarine, salad dressing, soups, soy sauce, condiments, and snack foods
- > Pepper, herbs and spices, vinegar, lemon, or lime juice
- > Low-sodium carbonated drinks



Limit Your Fluid Intake

Limiting fluids is one way you can help to manage heart failure. It can also help to keep you out of the hospital. Every patient is different, so follow your doctor's instructions on how much fluid you should have every day.

- Find a way of tracking the fluids you take in that works for you. Here are 2 methods you can try:
 - > Write down how much you drink throughout the day.
 - > Keep a container filled with the amount of liquid you are allowed to have for the day. As you drink liquids during the day, such as a 6-ounce cup of coffee, pour that same amount out of the container. When the container is empty, you have had all your liquid for the day.
- Count any foods that will melt (such as ice cream, gelatin, or flavored ice treats) or liquid foods (such as soup) as part of your fluids for the day. Also, count the liquid in canned fruits and vegetables as part of your daily intake or drain them well before serving.
- Space your liquids throughout the day so you will not want to drink more than the amount your doctor recommends.
- Do not drink alcohol because it makes your heart failure worse. It can also affect your medicines.
- A small amount of caffeine is usually okay in moderation. Check with your provider to make sure it is okay for you. If you are allowed caffeine, do not have more than 1 or 2 cups per day.

Scan the QR code to watch "*Heart Failure: Limiting Fluids.*"



Tips for Dry Mouth

- Sip cool beverages and snack on cold fruit and vegetables.
- Suck on a frozen lemon or lime or try eating frozen grapes.
- Suck on hard candy or chew gum.
- Rinse your mouth with water or mouthwash and then spit it out.
- Avoid salty, very spicy, or very sweet foods.

Stay Active

Regular physical activity helps you feel better. When you are active, it helps the heart and lungs use oxygen better. Physical activity also helps:

- Lower your blood pressure.
- Control your weight.
- Decrease stress and tension.
- Boost your energy level.

Choose any activity you enjoy. If you like the activity, you are more likely to continue doing it. Walking, biking, and swimming are great choices. It may be more enjoyable if you ask a friend or family member to join you. When exercising:

- Rest before you feel tired.
- Be able to breathe well enough so you can carry on a conversation while exercising.
- Rest if you feel short of breath.
- Avoid activities that make you grunt, groan, or strain.



Scan the QR code to watch *“Heart Failure: Being Active.”*

Exercise Routine

You will get the most benefit from a regular exercise routine. It is best if you exercise 5 to 7 days a week for 30 to 60 minutes (begin with 5 to 10 minutes several times a day and add about 5 minutes per week as you are able). You should increase the amount of time you exercise little by little. Ask your doctor before you increase the speed or intensity of your exercise.

Warm-Up and Cool-Down

Each time you exercise, start slowly with a 5-minute warm-up. At the end of each exercise session, finish slowly with a 5-minute cooldown period. This may include stretching exercises. You will feel better and have more energy, and your daily activities will seem easier.

Cardiac Rehabilitation

Ask your doctor about joining a cardiac rehabilitation program in your area. These programs have trained staff who can help you increase your exercise tolerance, decrease heart failure symptoms, and improve your quality of life. Most insurance plans cover the cost of the rehabilitation program.

Exercise Plan

Exercise Goal(s):

Date	Time	Activity	Length of Time	How I Felt While Exercising	How I Felt After Exercising

Saving Energy

- When being active and exercising, choose a time when you feel your best and pace yourself. Stop and rest for a while if you feel tired.
- Avoid becoming too tired. Plan ahead so that you are not doing all of your work in 1 day, or at 1 time during the day. You may have a certain time each day when you have more energy. Plan to do your most difficult tasks during that time.
- When doing a task, gather all the supplies you will need, so you can avoid making unnecessary trips.
- Sit instead of stand when you do activities such as ironing, washing dishes, shaving, or brushing your teeth.
- At work, take advantage of breaks and lunchtime to sit and rest.
- When climbing stairs, put 2 feet on each step. Stop and rest if you need to.
- If you feel tired, dizzy, or short of breath, stop and rest.
- Ask those around you for help.

Make sure to talk to your provider about what kind of activities and exercises are best for you. Follow the treatment plan they give you. Wait at least 1 hour after eating before exercising.

Do Not Smoke or Use Tobacco Products

If you smoke or use tobacco products, stop right away. If you need help quitting, please ask a member of your care team. For information about smoking/using tobacco products and how to quit, visit [UPMC.com/HealthLibrary](https://www.upmc.com/HealthLibrary) or online at [UPMC.com/Classes](https://www.upmc.com/Classes). If you are interested in “Becoming a Quitter,” call 1-800-QUIT-NOW (1-800-784-8669) or visit pa.quitlogix.org.

When To Call for Help

For a medical emergency, call **911** or go to the nearest emergency department.

Call your doctor if you experience:

- New or increased shortness of breath
- Light-headedness, dizziness, or fainting
- Weight gain of 2 pounds or more in a day or 5 pounds or more in a week
- Abdominal (belly) bloating or swelling in legs or ankles
- Unexplained side effects after taking medicine
- Any new heart failure symptoms or worsening of any current symptoms

Make a list of your questions and concerns so that you will remember everything when you call your doctor. Be ready to give the following information:

- Your weights for the last week
- Location of any swelling
- Changes in your breathing
- Blood pressure and heart rate for the last few checks
- Name and dose of your diuretic (water pills) and when you last took them
- Any changes in your diet
- If you missed a dose of any medicines or are taking any new medicines (for other conditions)

Scan the QR code to watch “*Heart Failure: When to Call for Help.*”



Advance Care Planning

If you have heart failure, taking care of yourself will help you feel better and live longer, but it is always a good idea to plan for the future now while you are active and able to communicate your wishes. A legal document, called an advance directive or living will, can help your family make decisions if you are unable to tell your wishes.

If you do this kind of planning, it does not mean that you are giving up. It is the best way to make sure that you get the care and treatment you want. It can also make things much easier for your loved ones. Everyone should have an advance directive.

Palliative Care

The Palliative Care Team can help you improve your quality of life while living with heart failure. They can help you to feel better physically, emotionally, and spiritually while doctors work to treat your illness. Your care may include pain relief, counseling, or nutrition advice. Palliative care can help treat symptoms such as pain, nausea, or sleep problems. It can also help you and your family and friends to:

- Understand your illness better
- Talk more openly about your feelings
- Decide what treatments you want or do not want
- Communicate better with your doctors, nurses, and each other

Key Points to Remember

- Take your medicines exactly as prescribed.
- Record your weight every day at about the same time.
- Eat foods with less than 140 mg of sodium per serving.
- Limit fluid intake to 8 (8-ounce) glasses per day, or as recommended by your doctor.
- Follow your care team’s instructions for activity. Ask if a cardiac rehabilitation program is right for you.
- Do not smoke or use tobacco products. If you do, stop right away.
- Follow-up care is a key part of your treatment and safety. Be sure to make and go to all appointments and call your doctor if you are having problems. You should bring a list of all the medicines you take, your heart failure calendar, and any questions or concerns you have to all your doctor appointments.



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