

HOW AM I DOING TODAY? A GUIDE FOR CHF PATIENTS.

EVERYDAY

Weigh yourself in the morning before breakfast and write it down | Take your medicine the way you should | Check for swelling in your feet, ankles, legs and stomach | Eat low salt foods | Balance activity and rest periods | Which Heart Failure Zone are you today...Green, Yellow or Red?

GREEN ZONE

- Doing well
- Managing normal activities
- No change in symptoms
- No weight gain or swelling
- Usual medications are controlling symptoms

WHAT TO DO

- Continue taking medications as prescribed
- Continue to follow prescribed diet
- Keep all doctor appointments
- Continue to check and record weight every day
- Maintain routine activity

YELLOW ZONE

Gain more than 3 pounds over 1 day or 5 pounds in a week OR a gain of less weight than above AND also have any of the **symptoms below**:

- New **swelling** in feet or ankles
- **Bloated** abdomen
- Dry, harsh **cough or wheezing** that will not go away
- **Side effects** from medications
- More **tired** than usual and/or less energy than usual
- The need to use **2 or more pillows** or sleep in recliner to breathe comfortably
- More **shortness of breath** than usual with routine activity
- Just don't feel well – unusually **restless/ anxious/uneasy**
- **Dizzy or light-headed**
- **Chest discomfort**
- **Loss of appetite**

WHAT TO DO

1. Write down (or have someone write for you) what your concerns are and why you think something is wrong
 - Be VERY SPECIFIC – write down:
 - Exactly what your symptoms are, how long you have had them and how they are different than usual (ie. I gained ____ pounds in ____ days or I am more short of breath than usual)
 - Anything that may have changed since your last visit (ie. My family doctor discontinued my lasix last week)
2. Call your cardiologist. If you don't have a cardiologist, call your primary care provider. Tell them:
 - Your name
 - Your doctor's name
 - Your history (ie. I have a history of heart failure)
 - Any measurements you may have taken (weight, blood pressure, pulse)
 - What your symptoms are and how they have changed (ie. For 2 days now, I have been so tired it's hard to get out of bed)
 - Anything that you have written down about your concerns
 - You need an appointment today (or tomorrow at the latest)
3. If you cannot get an appointment today or tomorrow, contact the Ellis Medicine Community Wellness program at 518.243.3333 for an immediate appointment. Tell them you need the cardiac-CHF program.
4. Emphasize that your goal is to stay out of the hospital

RED ZONE

- Severe **shortness of breath** – symptoms are VERY different than usual
- **Chest pain** that does not go away even after taking 3 nitroglycerin doses
- **Heart racing**
- Feeling like you are going to **faint**
- A feeling of **impending doom** – something is very wrong

WHAT TO DO

Call 911 NOW!



REINVENTING HEALTHCARE
ONE PATIENT AT A TIME