



Managing Your Congestive Heart Failure

Ellis
MEDICINE

REINVENTING HEALTHCARE
ONE PATIENT AT A TIME



Important Information

Primary Care Physician: _____

Telephone Number: _____

Cardiologist: _____

Telephone Number: 518.377.8184

Ellis Medicine Community Wellness Program:

Telephone Number for Appointments: 518.243.3333

- Call if unable to be seen by a Physician within 3 days of discharge
- Call for worsening signs and symptoms if unable to be seen by Primary Care Physician or Cardiologist immediately

Telephone Number for Information: 518.243.4771

Visiting Nurse Services of Schenectady and Saratoga Counties:

Telephone Number: 518.382.7932

Outpatient Dietitian:

Telephone Number (for appointments) – 518.243.3333

Other Information:

Managing Your Congestive Heart Failure

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What is Heart Failure?

What is heart failure (HF)?

- Heart failure means that your heart's pumping power is weaker than normal.
- Because of the weakness of the heart muscle blood flow is not great enough to meet the needs of the body. This can cause fluid retention or "edema".
- Heart failure can be mild or severe and tends to get worse over time. However, appropriate treatment can slow the progression and even improve symptoms and function.

What causes heart failure?

A number of conditions can contribute to heart failure including:

- Weakness of the heart muscle due to:
 - Heart attack(s)
 - Certain infections
 - High blood pressure
- Problems with heart valves
- Irregular heart beat
- Severe lung problems
- Alcohol and some other drugs

What are the signs and symptoms of heart failure?

Because blood flow is less than normal, people with heart failure experience a number of common symptoms:

- Weight gain or loss of three or more pounds in one day, or five or more pounds in one week
- Persistent cough or chest congestion.
- Swelling of legs, feet, hands, or abdomen
- Shortness of breath at rest or with exercise or exertion
- Increasing fatigue or a sudden decrease in your ability to do your usual activities

What is Heart Failure?

Signs and symptoms of heart failure – continued:

- Confusion or restlessness
- Loss of appetite or nausea
- Shortness of breath while lying in bed at night

What can I do about heart failure?

If you have heart failure, there are many things you can do to feel well and to stay healthy. This booklet teaches you important skills that have been shown to greatly reduce problems with heart failure.

The things you do (or don't do) can greatly affect your health with heart failure. Careful attention to these key points will help you feel better and reduce complications.

- Watch for signs and symptoms
- Follow your recommended diet
- Take medications as prescribed by your doctor
- Exercise following your doctor's recommendations.
- Communicate with your doctor on a regular basis

Heart failure symptoms can get worse very quickly. These symptoms are usually due to fluid collection in your lungs or other parts of your body. Paying attention to how you feel and reporting changes to your doctor can keep you well and avoid serious problems.

Be sure to call your doctor as soon as you notice any change in your signs or symptoms.

What is Heart Failure?

Weigh yourself:

Extra fluid from heart failure causes your weight to go up quickly. Weighing yourself every day is an easy way to check for worsening heart failure.

Follow these easy steps:

- Weigh yourself at the same time every day, wearing the same clothes (for example, pajamas).
- Weigh yourself first thing in the morning before you eat or drink anything.
- Use the same scale every time, and place the scale on a hard, flat surface.
- Have someone help you if you are not steady on your feet.
- Write down your weight each time.
- Call your doctor if you experience a weight gain of three or more pounds in one day or five pounds in one week.

Your weight should be almost the same every day. This is normal. If your weight goes up or down quickly, it may be a sign of your heart failure getting worse.

DO YOU HAVE A SCALE?

Be sure to weigh yourself, and record your weight every day.

What is Heart Failure?

Take a look at yourself:

You may see changes that are due to your heart failure getting worse. Check yourself daily, and contact your doctor if you notice any major changes in how you look. Review the Red, Yellow and Green Zone document daily.

Your Diet

Making healthy food choices and eating a well-balanced diet can make you feel better. Your doctor may recommend that you limit the amount of sodium (salt) in your diet. The nutrition plan for heart failure usually limits the sodium that you get from food and drinks to 2000 milligrams (mg) per day.

Sodium makes the body hold onto water, and can cause fluid to build up within your body. Symptoms you may experience with fluid build-up are increased shortness of breath, and/or a full feeling, and/or swelling of your lower legs/feet, and/or an increase in weight. Too much fluid makes your heart work harder.

Salt and Sodium

A teaspoon of salt contains 2,325 milligrams (mg) of sodium. Sodium is the major ingredient in table salt and sea salt. A good first step is to take the salt shaker off your table, including sea salt.

Tips for reducing sodium intake:

- Avoid processed food which often contain large amounts of salt
- Avoid high-salt foods or those with more than 300 mg of sodium per serving (check the Nutrition Facts Label)
- Use caution when you eat outside of your home. Restaurant foods can be high in sodium, and you cannot always get information about how much sodium a food or meal contains
- Select foods with no more than 140 mg of sodium per serving
- Look for the words "low sodium" and "sodium free." "Reduced sodium" is often not low enough in sodium to fit into your diet

You should AVOID these items:

- Processed meats – hot dogs, cold cuts, bologna, ham, turkey
- Frozen foods – dinners, entrees, vegetables with sauces
- Canned foods – soups, stews, sauces and some vegetables

Your Diet

- Packaged starchy foods- macaroni and cheese dinners, seasoned noodles, rice mixes, stuffing mix, seasoned bread crumbs
- Instant foods to which you add water and stir- potatoes, cereals, noodles, rice, dried soup mixes, bouillon cubes, etc
- Canned or smoked fish
- Cheeses and cheese spreads- American cheese, Velveeta, etc., any cheese with more than 140 mg sodium per serving
- Canned meats – Spam, Vienna sausages, meat spreads
- Pickles, olives, sauerkraut.
- Tomato sauce and vegetable juices
- Most “fast food”, for example, Chinese food
- Condiments: soy sauce, Worcestershire sauce, catsup, and mustard.
- Peanut butter
- Spices that contain salt in their name like garlic salt, onion salt or celery salt
- Ham, bacon, sausage
- Snack foods that are salted: chips, pretzels and crackers.

Instead CHOOSE these foods:

- Fresh meat or fish.
- Fresh or frozen vegetables.
- Spices that do not have salt in their name.
- Snack foods such as nuts (unsalted), fresh fruit, raisins.

There may be hidden sodium in other foods. Reading the food labels is a good way to find out how much sodium is in the canned/prepared food. *If salt or sodium is listed as being added to the food, there may be too much sodium in it. Be sure to ask your doctor how much salt or sodium you are permitted to eat (in milligrams [mgs] per serving), and compare this amount with the amount of sodium in the food according to its nutritional label.*

Your Diet

Flavor can be added to foods in ways other than adding salt...

You can use the following herbs and spices to season your foods. Be creative and give them a try!

- Garlic and garlic powder
- Onion and onion powder
- Pepper
- Salt-free seasoning mixes such as Mrs. Dash
- Lemon or lime juice
- Vinegar
- Simple salad dressings (such as oil and vinegar)
- Other non-salty herbs and spices such as dill, bay leaf, curry powder, basil, oregano, nutmeg, allspice, and mint

In time, your taste buds will adjust to your decrease in salt intake.

Salt-free Seasoning Blend – Spice up your foods without salt!

- 1 Tbsp. garlic powder
- 2 tsp. dried thyme leaves
- 2 tsp. onion powder
- 2 tsp. paprika
- 2 tsp. celery seed
- 1 tsp. pepper
- 1-1/2 tsp. ground white pepper
- 1 Tbsp. dry mustard powder
- 2 tsp. dried finely chopped lemon peel

Mix all the ingredients together in a small mixing bowl. Use on meats, poultry and fish, or at the table for a salt-free seasoning!

Your Diet

Reading Nutrition Labels

All packaged foods have labels that say how much sodium is in the product. Reading your food labels will help you learn which foods contain the most sodium.

Nutrition Facts	Amount/serving	%DV*	Amount/serving	%DV*
Serv. Size 1 cup (249g)	Total Fat 12g	18%	Sodium 940mg	39%
Servings About 2	Sat. Fat 6g	30%	Total Carb. 24g	8%
Calories 250	Pol/unsat. Fat 1.5g		Dietary Fiber 1g	4%
Fat Cal. 110	Monounsat. Fat 2.5g		Sugars 1g	
*Percent Daily Values (DV) are based on a 2,000 calorie diet.	Cholest. 60mg	20%	Protein 10g	20%
	Vitamin A 0% • Vitamin C 0% • Calcium 6% • Iron 8%			

1. Think about how many servings you may eat. In this case, the package contains two servings. Eating the entire package would give you 1880mg sodium – almost the total salt you should eat in a single day!

2. Find the sodium (salt) content on the label. In this case, a single serving has 940mg of sodium.

Look for foods labeled...

- **SODIUM-FREE OR SALT-FREE.** Each serving in this product contains less than 5 mg of sodium.
- **VERY LOW SODIUM.** Each serving contains 35 mg of sodium or less
- **LOW SODIUM.** Each servings contains 140 mg of sodium or less

Your Diet

Potassium

Certain medications called “diuretics” or “water pills” that help your body get rid of extra fluid can also cause potassium to leave the body. You should always discuss your diet with your doctor, since certain medications used for heart failure can have an opposite effect and lead to too much potassium. The following foods are good sources of potassium:

- Banana
- Orange
- Orange Juice
- Prune Juice
- Prunes
- Nectarines
- Dried Apricots
- Swiss Chard
- Cantaloupe
- Raisins
- Figs
- Baked Potato
- Boiled Potato
- Tomatoes
- Winter Squash
- Papaya
- Spinach
- Sweet Potato
- Baked Beans
- Brussel Sprouts
- Dates
- Soy Milk
- Avocado
- Lima Beans

Fluids

Heart failure can cause increased fluid build-up in your body, because your heart is not pumping effectively. Many heart failure patients take diuretics to help remove extra fluid. These diuretics may cause you to feel more thirsty than normal. If you are thirsty, try sucking on small amounts of sugar-free hard candy to help relieve dry mouth.

Fluid Measurements:

1 quart = 4 cups = 32 ounces = 960 ml

1 pint = 2 cups = 16 ounces = 480 ml

1 cup = 8 ounces = 240 ml

Your Diet

The following are considered fluids and should be taken in moderation:

- Water
- Juice
- Soda Pop
- Coffee
- Tea
- Milk
- Soup
- Sherbet
- Lemonade
- Jell-O
- Ice Cream
- Nutrition Drinks
- Popsicles
- Ice Cubes
- Fruits
- Sport Drinks
- Milk Substitutes

Hints for Fluid Control

- Eat allowed fruits and vegetables ice cold between meals
- Try lemon wedges, sour hard candies, or chewing gum to stimulate saliva and moisten a dry mouth
- Rinse your mouth with mouthwash
- Chew on ice cubes
- Use small cups and glasses for beverages
- Remember that 2 cups of retained fluids is equal to 1 pound of weight gain
- Freeze allowed beverage in ice cube trays
- Drink in sips instead of gulps
- Measure fluid allotment for the day and store it in a container in the refrigerator
- Keep home well humidified

Alcohol

If you drink alcoholic beverages, ask your doctor how much is safe for you to drink.

MEDICATION

Tips For Taking Your Medications

- Carry a list of your medications in your wallet or purse. Write down the dose of each drug and the time of day that you take them.
- Learn what each medication does and what it looks like.
- Make sure you have enough medications. Plan ahead so you don't run out.
- Take ALL of your medications as prescribed. If think you may be experiencing a side effect from medicine, call your doctor and also mention it at your next appointment.
- Keep all medications in their original labeled container. DO NOT mix different medications into the same container for storage, unless you are using a pill organizer to help you manage your medications.
- Do not double up on medications. If you miss a dose, call your doctor or pharmacist.
- If you get sick and can't take your medications, contact your doctor or pharmacist immediately.
- Don't be afraid to call your doctor or pharmacist if you have any questions. They are there to help you.
- Write down any questions you may have about your medications and bring them to your doctor appointments and pharmacy visits.

MEDICATION

Medications are very important for treating your heart failure. The drugs maintain health, improve symptoms, and help prolong life. It is important to always take them on a regular basis as instructed by your doctor.

Try to get all your medications from one pharmacy. This will allow the pharmacist to adequately check for drug interactions.

It is very important that your doctor is aware of all the medications that you are taking. This includes over-the-counter medications, vitamins, home remedies, herbal medicines, as well as other prescription medications. They may interfere with your prescribed medications.

PLEASE REMEMBER – Keep all medications away from children

The following are important facts about heart failure drugs. For complete information on the medications you take, ask your doctor or pharmacist.

MEDICATION

Heart Failure Medications

There are seven types of drugs that are commonly used to treat heart failure. Used together or separately, they improve the functioning of your heart because they:

1. Help to make your heart pump stronger
2. Control heart rhythm
3. Relax blood vessels
4. Control fluid
5. Slow progression of the disease

Your doctor may have ordered medications for you to help your heart work better. These medications work well together, so most people with heart failure take several medications.

1. Angiotensin-Converting Enzyme (ACE) Inhibitor:

Examples: Captopril (Capoten[®], Capozide[®]), Enalapril (Vasotec[®]), Acebutolol (Sectral[®]), Lisinopril (Prinivil[®], Zestril[®]), Benazepril (Lotensin[®]), Fosinopril (Monopril[®]), Trandolapril (Mavik[®]), Quinapril (Accupril[®]), Ramipril (Altace[®])

These drugs improve symptoms and prevent worsening of symptoms by relaxing blood vessels, controlling fluid, and slowing the progression of heart failure. There are eight or more different ACE Inhibitors available, and you may receive one in a combination tablet with other drugs.

Your doctor may slowly increase the dose over time to a level that is just right for you. Your doctor may perform blood tests to make sure the drug is working properly for you.

MEDICATION

Seek medical attention if you experience:

- Lightheadedness, dizziness, falls
- Swelling of the lips, throat, or eyes
- Skin rash
- New or persistent cough

2. Angiotensin II Receptor Blockers (ARBs):

Examples: Irebsartan (Avapro[®]), Losartan (Cozaar[®]), Valsartan (Diovan[®]), Candesartan (Atacand[®])

These drugs are similar to ACE Inhibitors, but are less likely to cause bothersome cough. There are 7 or more ARBs available, and you may receive one in a combination tablet with other drugs. Your doctor may perform blood tests to make sure the drug is working properly for you.

Seek medical attention if you experience:

- Lightheadedness, dizziness, falls
- Swelling of the lips, throat, or eyes
- Skin rash
- New or persistent cough

3. Beta Blockers:

Examples: Carvedilol (Coreg[®]), Atenolol (Tenormin[®]), Betaxolol (Kerlone[®]), Labetalol (Normodyne[®], Trandate[®]), Metoprolol (Lopressor[®], Toprol XL[®]), Nadolol (Corgard[®]), Penbutolol (Levitol[®]), Pindolol (Visken[®]), Propranolol (Inderal[®]), Timolol (Blocadren[®])

MEDICATION

These drugs control heart rhythm, relax the heart, and slow the progression of heart failure. Do not crush or chew tablets unless directed to do so by your doctor. Do not stop taking the drug without medical supervision, because stopping too quickly can cause problems. If you are diabetic, be sure to closely monitor your blood sugar while taking beta blockers.

Seek medical attention if you experience:

- Trouble breathing
- Leg pain
- Chest pain
- Lightheadedness, dizziness, or falls
- Worsening heart failure symptoms

4. Digoxin (Lanoxin™): This drug is used to help control heart rhythm and to make the heart beat stronger. Remember to take it exactly as prescribed by the doctor.

Seek medical attention if you experience:

- Nausea, vomiting
- Chest pain, palpitations, or abnormal heart rhythm
- Changes in vision (see yellow or blue “halo” around objects)

5. Diuretics:

Examples: Bumetanide (Bumex®), Furosemide (Lasix®), Torsemide (Demadex®)

These medications help your body remove extra fluid by causing you to urinate more. Remember to stay close to a bathroom for approximately one hour after you take your medication, in case you should have to urinate.

MEDICATION

Your doctor may have you take a diuretic every day, or may instruct you to take it more or less often. Make a point of talking to your doctor about how often you take your diuretics and how well they are working.

Seek medical attention if you experience that:

- You are not urinating as much as usual
- Your heart failure symptoms are getting worse
- Your weight has gone up more than three pounds in a day, or more than five pounds in a week
- Swelling has gotten worse
- You are dizzy, confused, or fall
- You are experiencing palpitations, or skipped heart beats
- You have leg cramps, rash, or change in hearing

6. Aldosterone Blockers:

Examples: Spironolactone (Aldactone®), Eplerenone (Inspra®)

These medications are a special type of diuretic (water pill) that have been shown to improve the health of people with heart failure. While they may cause some increase in urination, their main action is to prevent fluid from building up.

Seek medical attention if you experience:

- Lightheadedness, dizziness, or falls
- Breast enlargement (in men)

MEDICATION

7. Vasodilators:

Examples: Clonidine (oral) (Catapres®), Clonidine (transdermal patch) (Catapres-TTS®), Guanabenz (Wytensin®), Guanfacine (Tenex®), Guanadrel (Hylorel®), Guanethidine (Ismelin®), Methyldopa (Aldomet®), Prazosin (Minipress®), Terazosin (Hytrin®), Reserpine (combination) (Diupres®), Hydralazine (Apresoline®), Minoxidil (Loniten®)

These drugs relax blood vessels and improve health in patients with heart failure. They are typically used in people who cannot take ACE Inhibitors or ARBs, or in people who need additional medications to control blood pressure or chest pain.

Nitroglycerine and other nitrates are vasodilators and come in a variety of forms, including tablets, capsules, and skin patches. Your doctor may also prescribe nitroglycerine used under the tongue for chest pain.

Nitrates may need special storage. Be sure to speak to your doctor or pharmacist about the proper way to use the nitrate product prescribed for you.

Seek medical attention if you experience:

- Lightheadedness, dizziness or falls
- Skin rash
- Severe headaches
- Infections
- Numbness or tingling
- Joint pain or swelling

MEDICATION

Additional Medications

Your doctor may prescribe additional medications to keep you healthy and to help you avoid problems with heart failure.

1. Potassium: Potassium is a mineral that your heart needs to function properly. Because some water pills cause you to lose potassium in your urine, your doctor may prescribe potassium supplements.

Potassium can irritate your throat and stomach, so be sure to take with plenty of water and with food, and to remain upright for a period of time after swallowing. Do not crush or cut potassium capsules or tablets. Liquids are available if you have difficulty swallowing – ask your doctor.

Blood tests should be performed to check your potassium levels. Some foods and salt substitutes are high in potassium, such as bananas, dried apricots, oranges and salt substitutes. Discuss your potassium levels with your doctor frequently.

2. Blood thinners: Heart failure sometimes increases your risk for developing blood clots, so your doctor may prescribe one or more “blood thinners”. These are drugs that slow down clotting or keep certain blood cells (platelets) from clumping. Be sure to take them exactly as directed. Report any bleeding to your doctor right away.

If you are taking a blood thinner, you may need to have your blood tested regularly.

Seek medical attention if you experience:

- Bleeding from gums, nose, rectum, or vagina
- Blood in urine or stool

MEDICATION

- Red, dark brown or black bowel movements
- Bruising or soreness
- Severe or persistent headaches
- Dizziness or weakness
- Abdominal pain

3. Cholesterol Lowering Drugs: High cholesterol increases your risk of heart attacks and strokes, and heart failure patients are often prescribed drugs to lower cholesterol. There are a variety of cholesterol drugs available, each with special instructions for use. Speak to your doctor or pharmacist about any cholesterol drugs you may be taking.

4. Antiarrhythmics: Heart failure patients may have trouble keeping a normal, regular heart rhythm, and your doctor may prescribe drugs to help control rhythm. Speak to your doctor or pharmacist for more information about any heart rhythm drugs you may be taking.

5. Other Blood Pressure Medications: Patients with heart failure often have high blood pressure, and your doctor may prescribe additional blood pressure drugs to keep your pressure down. Speak to your doctor or pharmacist for more information about any blood pressure drugs you may be taking.

DRUGS TO WATCH

Some medications can make heart failure worse, and should be avoided whenever possible. Be sure to inform your heart doctor of all medications that you take, and check with them before taking any new medications. These include over-the-counter pain medicines, and cough and cold remedies. Non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs such as ibuprofen (Motrin, Advil) and naproxen (Aleve) should be avoided.

EXERCISE

The amount of exercise you can do will depend on the degree of your heart failure. Talk with your doctor about the types and amount of exercise that are right for you. Your doctor may refer you to a cardiac rehabilitation program to help you plan and monitor your response to exercise.

- Exercise should be guided by common sense
- Short walks are a good way to begin exercise, however, do not walk to the point of pain or discomfort
- Avoid any exercise that causes chest pain, shortness of breath, dizziness or lightheadedness
- Wait at least 1 to 1½ hours after eating a meal before exercising
- Avoid exercising when it's too hot or humid or you don't feel well
- Resume sexual activity according to your doctor's instructions
- Avoid extreme temperatures
- Avoid heavy lifting
- Stick with it! If you exercise regularly, it will soon become a part of your lifestyle. Finding an exercise "buddy" will also help you stay motivated.

EXERCISE

Talk with your doctor about how much exercise is right for you.

Level 1: NO LIMITATIONS

Level 2: SOME LIMITATIONS

- Limit walking to ____ feet or ____ houses
(1 house = approximately 50 feet)
- Limit stair climbing to ____ stairs ____ times a day
(Average 12-15 stairs to second level or basement)

Plan your daily tasks to conserve your energy level. Assistance may be necessary for some of your usual tasks.

Level 3: MARKED LIMITATIONS

- Limit walking to ____ feet (maximum of 40-50)
- Limit stair climbing to ____ stairs ____ times a day
- Limit pushing, pulling, straining.
- Limit lifting to ____ pounds.

Plan your daily tasks to conserve your energy level. Heavy tasks must be limited as per your doctor.

Level 4: SIMPLE LIGHT ACTIVITIES ONLY

- Out of bed to chair with assist or as tolerated
- No above the shoulder activities (no lifting, pushing, pulling, or straining)
- Limit your activity to very simple, light tasks

You should conserve your energy by limiting what you do.

This will help you minimize your shortness of breath and palpitations.

Patient and/or Caregiver Responsibilities

Your family and friends are part of your health care team. Ask your family members or friends for help in monitoring your condition. Your family and friends should know when to report new symptoms or a change in symptoms to your doctor if you are not able to.

Before calling your doctor, have the following information with you:

- List of medications
- Phone number to your local pharmacy
- Daily weight log sheet and other information, if available (your blood pressure readings, pulse, any changes in your breathing).

It is important to be specific when you are speaking to the doctor.

- Say you are being treated for heart failure
- Describe your symptoms:
 - When did your symptoms start?
 - What makes the symptoms better?
 - What makes them worse?
 - What has already been done to bring relief or comfort?
 - Have you had a sudden weight gain of three or more pounds in one day or five pounds in one week?

The next page is a helpful form to use when you call your doctor.

Talking with Your Doctor

When you talk with your doctor, it's important to tell him/her exactly what is happening. Use the tips below to talk with your provider.

Before making the call, have the following information with you:

- Your personal health record.
- List of your medications.
- Pharmacy name and telephone number.
- Your current problems/illnesses/diagnoses.

S SITUATION I am having:

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pain (explain where pain is felt) | <input type="checkbox"/> Harder time breathing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Unexplained weight gain | <input type="checkbox"/> Weight loss |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Difficulty sleeping | <input type="checkbox"/> Nausea |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Vomiting | <input type="checkbox"/> Bleeding |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other (explain): _____ | |

B BACKGROUND I began to feel this way: (When did it start?)

What makes it better is: _____

What makes it worse is: _____

How long it lasts: _____

It prevents me from doing my usual activities: Yes No

My last: Weight _____ Blood Sugar _____

Temperature _____ Blood Pressure/Pulse _____

A ASSESSMENT

I think I feel this way because (Include any other possible reasons: emotional, stress, finances, new medication):

R RECOMMENDATION (by your doctor)

(Write down your doctor's instructions)