

**Montefiore**

**Montefiore Einstein**  
Center for Heart &  
Vascular Care

# Living with Heart Failure

**Heart Failure Program**



# Table of Contents

Your treatment plan.....	1
How your heart works .....	2
What is heart failure?.....	3
Symptoms of heart failure.....	4
Common causes of heart failure .....	5
How to take care of yourself .....	6-7
Medicine .....	6
Daily Weights.....	6
Fluid Restriction .....	7
Sodium Restriction .....	7
Exercise .....	7
Managing your medications.....	8
Medicines for heart failure .....	8-11
Nutrition/Diet.....	12-16
Reading food labels .....	17
Limiting fluids.....	18-19
Exercise.....	20-21
Managing stress.....	22
Avoiding colds and flu .....	22
Stopping smoking.....	23
Other ways to improve heart function.....	23
Devices and advanced therapies.....	24-25
Planning for the future.....	26
Heart failure diary .....	27-29
Important phone numbers .....	30
Learn More about Heart Failure.....	31
Notes.....	31-35



# Your Treatment Plan



## 1. Diet

\_\_\_\_\_ milligrams (mg) sodium (salt) per day

\_\_\_\_\_ cups of fluid per day (\_\_\_\_\_ oz.)

Avoid alcohol

2. **Weigh** yourself on the same scale each morning upon waking and before you get dressed. Record your weight in a log. If you gain 3 pounds or more in 3 days, call your heart failure provider.

3. **Transmit data** from your implantable defibrillator/pacemaker WHEN and IF you are advised to do so by your heart failure provider.

## 4. Activity

---

---

\*Avoid extreme temperatures

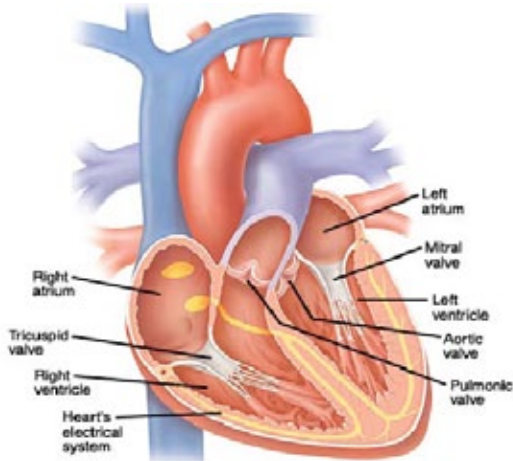
\*Avoid heavy lifting (greater than \_\_\_\_\_ lbs.)

## 5. Symptoms

Call your heart failure provider if you have new onset or increase in any of these:

- Chest pain/pressure
- Swelling in legs, ankles or hands
- New/worsening shortness of breath
- Pain or bloating in abdomen
- Difficulty breathing when lying down
- Loss of appetite
- Dizziness/fainting
- Bleeding or bruising easily
- Constant cough
- New/worsening palpitations
- Worsening fatigue
- Shock from your defibrillator
- 3 or more pound weight gain in 3 days (Notify your arrhythmia/device team)

# How Your Heart Works



The heart is a muscle which pumps and circulates blood in the body.

The heart is divided into four chambers or sections called the right and left atrium and the right and left ventricles.

These chambers are separated by valves. Valves allow the blood to move from chamber to chamber without backing up.

The right upper and lower chambers supply blood to the lungs.

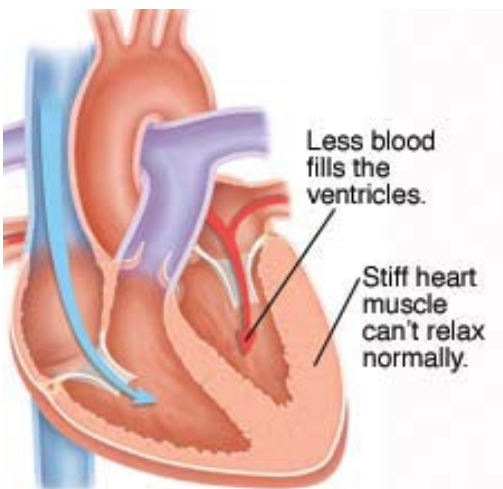
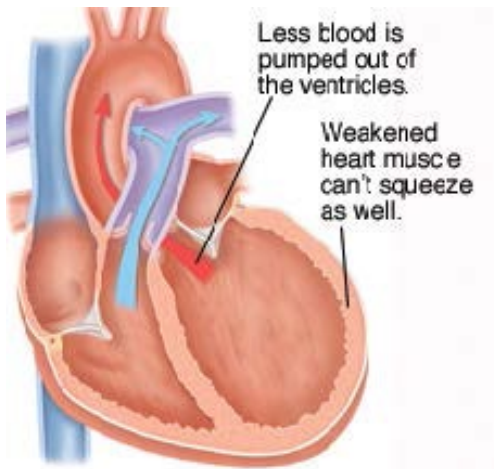
The left upper and lower chambers supply oxygen-rich blood to the tissues in the body.

With each heartbeat, a normal left ventricle pumps out or "ejects" 55 – 60% of the blood it receives. This is called the "ejection fraction" or EF.

In heart failure, the heart pumps less blood with each beat, so the "ejection fraction" may not be within a normal range.

Because the tissues are receiving less blood and oxygen, they are unable to perform their functions properly. Activities such as walking, climbing stairs and carrying objects become more difficult.

Heart failure, or ineffective heart pumping, can start in the right or left chamber.



# What is Heart Failure?

Heart failure is a condition in which the heart muscle has become weaker or stiffer than normal.

This usually occurs gradually over a period of time.

The heart is unable to pump enough blood and oxygen to meet the body's needs.

When this happens, blood that should be pumped out of the heart backs up in the lungs and other parts of the body. This is why many people with heart failure have shortness of breath or swelling in the extremities such as your legs. So you may hear heart failure called "congestive heart failure" or CHF., as the body can become "congested" with extra fluid.

As the heart strains to do its work, the heart muscle fibers stretch and the chambers of the heart get bigger or become stiffer. This further impairs the heart's ability to perform.

## Heart failure can happen in two ways

**Systolic heart failure occurs** when the heart muscle becomes weak and enlarged. The heart muscle cannot contract or pump blood well.

**Diastolic heart failure (or Heart Failure with Preserved Ejection Fraction)** is present when the ventricles become stiff. The stiff muscle cannot relax between contractions, which keeps the ventricles from filling with enough blood.

# Symptoms of Heart Failure

The following symptoms are commonly associated with heart failure:

- Shortness of breath (may be all the time, with exertion or at night when lying down)
- Exercise intolerance
- Difficulty lying flat without extra pillows
- Increasing fatigue
- Swelling in extremities
- Rapid weight gain
- Abdominal distention and bloating
- Decreased appetite

Most of these symptoms are caused by excess fluid build-up. In heart failure, the body has difficulty ridding itself of salt and water.

The fluid builds up in the tissues of the body in the legs, abdomen and lungs.

The heart has to work harder to pump this extra fluid and this causes more fatigue.

It is important to communicate any new or increasing symptoms to your heart failure provider. Many times these symptoms can be treated with simple medications and diet adjustments before they are allowed to develop into a more serious situation.



# Common Causes of Heart Failure

Common causes of heart failure include:

- Hypertension (high blood pressure)
- Coronary artery disease (clogged heart arteries)
- Defective heart valves
- Viral illness
- Illicit drugs such as cocaine
- Alcohol abuse
- Idiopathic (unknown cause)

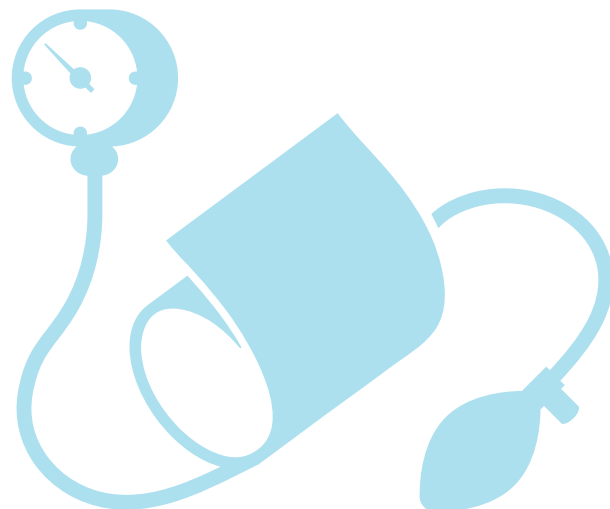
Heart failure is generally not curable, but it can be treated effectively and most people will feel better once therapy is started.

Correcting problems such as high blood pressure, blocked arteries, and diseased valves will help.

Stopping illicit drugs, alcohol, or cigarettes may help to stop the progression of the disease.

Medication and device therapies are aimed at helping the heart to work more efficiently and with less effort.

A combination of medication, diet, and exercise is an effective course of treatment.



# How to Take Care of Yourself: An Overview

In most cases, heart failure is a chronic condition. There is no easy cure. However, there are several ways that you can take an active role in your health.

It is important that you feel comfortable enough with your health care team to discuss any questions or concerns that you may have.

Never hesitate to notify your health care team if you are unclear on some aspect of your health care plan or feel that something just isn't quite right with how you feel.

Your health care team would always rather hear from you if something were wrong, rather than having you end up in the hospital.

## Medicine

Take your medicines exactly as they are ordered. Do not self-adjust your medications. If you are having problems following the medicine schedule, or if you think you are having side effects, be sure to tell your heart failure provider.

Bring your medicines and a copy of your medicine list with you to each visit.

Call the heart failure provider's office if you are running low on medicine. Refills can be called in to your pharmacy.

If you use mail order, be sure to order early so you do not run out of medicine.

Be sure to tell your heart failure provider if you are having problems paying for your medicines. They may be able to direct you to places where you can get help.

## Daily Weights

It is very important that you weigh yourself each morning when you wake up and before eating. Weigh yourself wearing approximately the same amount of clothing each time.

Keep track of your weight on a chart.

Follow the rule of "3's". Call your heart failure provider if you gain 3 pounds or more in 3 days. This could mean that you are retaining fluid.



## **Fluid Restriction**

You should limit your total fluid intake to 2 quarts (64 oz. or 8 cups) per day. This is to help keep your body from retaining fluid.

## **Sodium Restriction**

You should restrict your total daily sodium (salt) intake to 2000 mg per day. This helps to prevent your body from retaining fluid.

## **Exercise**

It is important to exercise as prescribed by your heart failure provider. Walking and biking are just some examples of exercise that you may perform.

The following pages give more detailed information on medications, diet and exercise. Take charge and learn more about taking care of your health.

# Managing Your Medicines



## Helpful Hints

Heart Failure is a serious condition. By being informed about your medicines, you can take an active part in your treatment. The following are helpful hints about your medicines:

- Know the names of your medicines.
- Know what your medicines are used for.
- Know the dosage of each medicine and how often you take it.
- Take your medicine as prescribed by your heart failure provider.
- Never change or stop taking your medicine without talking to your heart failure provider.
- Keep a list of your medicines at home and in your wallet.
- Take your medicine bottles and a copy of your medicine list to heart failure provider visits.
- Take your medicine with another daily activity you do at the same time of day, such as brushing your teeth.
- Know what to do if you miss a dose.
- Never take someone else's medicine.
- Don't take over the counter medicine without checking first with your heart failure provider.
- Notify your heart failure provider of any changes that have been made with your medicines.

## Medicines for Heart Failure

Heart failure is treated with a combination of medications, in addition to lifestyle changes and close monitoring. Some medications can help decrease progression of heart failure and extend your life, while other medications help decrease symptoms. The different medications can help you feel better. Of course, the more medications you take, the easier it is to make a mistake (such as missing a dose). Forgetting medications is one of the most common reasons people are hospitalized for heart failure. The best results are seen when patients understand what medicines they are taking and why. A standard medication regimen for people with heart failure includes an ACE inhibitor, a beta-blocker, an aldosterone antagonist, and a diuretic (water pill).

Medication	Also Called	These Medicines	Possible Side Effects
<b>ACE inhibitors</b>	Benazepril (Lotensin) Captopril (Capoten) Enalapril (Vasotec) Fosinopril (Monopril) Lisinopril (Zestril) Quinapril (Accupril) Ramipril (Altace)	Relax blood vessels Make it easier for heart to pump Help the heart muscle work better Can lower blood pressure Help symptoms and help keep you out of the hospital May extend your life	Persistent cough; kidney problems; weakness or dizziness; skin rashes; altered sense of taste; high potassium levels; swelling of face or lips
<b>Beta-blockers</b>	Bisoprolol (Zebeta) Carvedilol (Coreg) Metoprolol Succinate (Toprol XL)	Block the body's response to certain substances that can damage the heart Help the heart muscle to not have to work as hard Help heart muscle work more efficiently Can lower blood pressure and heart rate Help symptoms and help keep you out of the hospital May extend your life	Less tolerance for physical activity; low blood pressure; worsening of asthma symptoms
<b>Aldosterone antagonists</b>	Spironolactone (Aldactone) Eplerenone (Inspra)	Block sodium and water re-absorption Help prevent further damage to the heart Are not used as water pills at low doses (12.5–50mg)	Lethargy; drowsiness; fatigue; diarrhea; cramps; high potassium; low sodium
<b>Cardio-glycoside</b>	Digoxin	Help your heart pump Increase your heart's strength Help symptoms and help keep you out of the hospital	Loss of appetite; a bad taste in the mouth; nausea or vomiting; impaired kidney function; headaches; skipped heartbeats; rapid breathing

Medication	Also Called	These Medicines	Possible Side Effects
<b>Diuretics ("water pills")</b>	Bumetanide (Bumex) Furosemide (Lasix) Torsemide(Demadex) Metolazone (Zaroxolyn) Hydrochlorothiazide	Get rid of excess water in your legs, feet and lungs Help symptoms	Fatigue; low blood pressure; dizziness; poor kidney function; low potassium levels
<b>Angiotensin II receptor antagonists</b>	Candesartan (Atacand) Irbesartan (Avapro) Losartan (Cozaar) Olmesartan (Benicar) Valsartan (Diovan)	Open up vessels of the heart Make it easier for the heart to pump Help the heart muscle work more efficiently Can lower blood pressure Help symptoms May extend your life	Dizziness; weakness; diarrhea
<b>Vasodilators</b>	Hydralazine/ nitrates (BiDiL) Isosorbide dinitrate (Isordil) Isosorbide mononi- trate (Imdur)	Open up vessels of the heart Make it easier for the heart to pump Help the heart muscle work more efficiently Can lower blood pressure Help symptoms May extend your life	Fainting or dizziness, headaches; flushing; fast heart rate; heart palpitations; nasal congestion
<b>Calcium channel blockers</b>	Amlodipine (Norvasc) Nifedipine Diltiazem (Cardizem)* Verapamil*	Help heart muscle work better Lower blood pressure Can help symptoms	Headaches; facial flushing; dizziness; ankle swelling

\*These medicines should be avoided if you have heart failure from poor pumping function. Discuss this with your heart failure provider.

Medication	Also Called	These Medicines	Possible Side Effects
<b>Blood thinners**</b>	Aspirin Clopidogrel (Plavix) Ticlopidine (Ticlid) Warfarin (Coumadin) Dabigatran (Pradaxa)	Thin out blood Decrease your chance of having a heart attack or stroke	Increased risk of bleeding, easy bruising
<b>Anti-arrhythmics</b>	Amiodarone Dronedarone Mexiletine Dofetilide (Tikisyn) Sotalol	Help your heart pump better Help keep heart in a regular rhythm	Dizziness, numbness, tingling in arms, facial flushing, headache, nausea, shortness of breath
<b>Supplements</b>	Potassium Chloride (K-Dur, Klor-Con) Magnesium oxide	May be needed as a supplement due to the effects of your other medications Should be taken only at the direction of your heart failure provider	High potassium, high magnesium, nausea, vomiting, abdominal pain, diarrhea

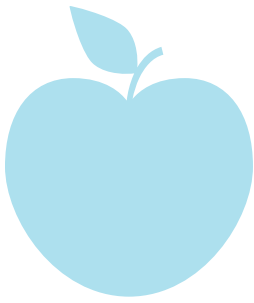
\*\* With blood thinners, your blood may need to be monitored. Discuss with your heart failure provider.

## A word of caution . . .

Talk to your heart failure provider before using over-the-counter medications, such as antacids, laxatives, cough medications and pain medications. These medications may contain sodium and could worsen your heart failure symptoms and make your prescription medications less effective. Other medications to avoid: atenolol, isosorbide dinitrate (isordil), isosorbide mononitrate (Imdur), nitroglycerin patch, diltiazem, felodipine and verapamil.

Avoid nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory (NSAIDs) medications. These include medications such as ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin), naproxen (Aleve), Celebrex and Mobic. Acetaminophen (Tylenol) is okay to use for minor aches and pains.

Talk with your heart failure provider before taking any vitamin or herbal therapies to make sure they are safe for people with heart failure and that they will not interact with your other medications.



## Nutrition/Diet

### The goals for your diet are to

1. Lower sodium (salt) in the diet to help prevent fluid build up (swelling) and reduce heart failure symptoms.
2. Provide adequate nutrients – eat fruits & vegetables daily.
3. Prevent stomach distress – you may need small meals with snacks and avoid foods that cause distress.
4. In the acute phase restrict caffeine intake.
5. Eat a well balanced diet to ensure you get all the vitamins and minerals you need.

### Quick tips to get you started

1. Leave the salt shaker off the table and do not cook with salt or salt containing spices (Adobo, Sazon, garlic salt etc.). Try experimenting with herbs and spices or fresh lemon. Look for salt-free seasoning blends in your grocery store spice section.
2. Learn to read food labels to avoid foods high in sodium. (See information later in booklet.)
3. Purchase fresh and frozen vegetables or vegetables canned without salt. If you have regular canned vegetables that you would like to use, rinse the vegetables and cook in a large amount of water to remove some of the salt.

1 teaspoon salt = 2,000 mg sodium

1 teaspoon baking soda = 821 mg sodium

1 teaspoon baking powder = 339 mg sodium

1 teaspoon MSG = 492 mg sodium



## More Hints to get you started

1. Bake, broil, boil, steam, roast or poach foods without salt. Add vegetables, herbs and spices, or lemon for seasonings.
2. Don't buy convenience foods such as skillet dinners, deli foods, cold cuts, hot dogs, canned soups. They are all high salt.
3. When you eat out, order baked, broiled, steamed or poached foods without breading, butter or sauces. Also ask that no salt be added. Go easy on the salad dressing, most are high in salt. Ask for oil & vinegar for your salad or lemon wedges. Order salad dressings or sauces on the side so you can control how much you use.
4. Stay away from "fast" foods. Most are high in salt.
5. Eat fresh or canned unsalted vegetables. Cook from scratch whenever possible.  
For example:

### Eat:

**1 cup of cooked, fresh  
or frozen green beans**

5 mg of sodium

½ cup of cooked rice:

2 mg of sodium

### Instead of:

**1 cup of canned green beans**

340 mg of sodium

½ cup of Rice-a-Roni or rice pilaf:

1,220 mg of sodium



## Foods Allowed

### Milk and milk products

#### (Limit milk to 16 oz./day)

Any milk (whole, low fat, skim or chocolate); cocoa; yogurt; eggnog; milkshake; 8 oz. milk substitute.

### Cheese

#### (Limit to ½ cup or 1 oz./day)

Dry curd cottage cheese, low fat or skim milk ricotta, part-skim mozzarella, low-sodium cheese, farmer cheese, Neufchatel.

### Vegetables

#### (2 or more servings/day)

Fresh or frozen vegetables without sauces; low-sodium canned vegetables and juices; white or sweet potatoes; salt-free potato chips.

### Fruit (2 or more servings/day)

All fruits (canned fresh or frozen) and fruit juices.

### Breads, cereal and pasta

(6-11 servings/day): Breads (all types), rolls and salt-free crackers; pasta, rice, and noodles cooked without salt; cooked cereal without salt, dry low-sodium cereals; shredded wheat, puffed rice and wheat.

### Meats or substitutes (6 oz./day)

Any fresh or fresh-frozen meats, fish, poultry or game meat; low-sodium canned tuna, sardines or salmon; eggs; dried or frozen peas and beans (not canned); low-sodium peanut butter, salt-free nuts and tofu.

## Foods to Avoid

### Milk and milk products

Buttermilk (can make salt-free buttermilk by adding 1 tbsp lemon juice to 1 cup of milk; let sit until thick).

### Cheese

Regular hard or processed cheeses and cheese spreads.

### Vegetables

Regular canned vegetables and vegetable juices; sauerkraut; pickled vegetables and other prepared products that use brine; frozen vegetables in sauce; regular potato chips.

### Fruit

None—all fruits are naturally low in sodium.

### Breads, cereal and pasta

Breads and rolls with salted tops; quick breads, instant hot cereals, dry cereals with added salt, regular crackers.

### Meats or substitutes

Any meat, fish or poultry that is smoked, cured, salted or canned (bacon, chipped beef, corned beef, cold cuts, ham, hot dogs and sausage); regular canned tuna or salmon; pickled eggs; regular peanut butter.

**Note:** When shopping for frozen dinners or convenience meals, choose items that provide 600mg or less per serving. Sodium levels can be found on the nutrition foods labels on the box.

## Foods Allowed

### Fats

Unsalted butter or margarine; unsalted salad dressings, vegetable oil, shortening; mayonnaise, light or sour cream.

### Sweets and desserts

Any sweets and desserts made without salt (desserts made from milk should be made from allowed milk products); frozen juice bars, fruit ice, sorbet, sherbet; jelly, jam, preserves; plain cookies (animal crackers, ginger snaps, etc.).

### Beverages

Most beverages; limit caffeine. If you have a water softener, obtain water for drinking and cooking before it is processed.

### Soups

Low-sodium commercial canned or dehydrated soups; homemade soups with meat, fresh or frozen vegetables, and/or allowed milk products and cooked without salt.

### Seasonings

Salt substitute (with heart failure provider's approval); pepper, herbs, spices, flavorings, vinegar, lemon & lime juice; salt-free seasoning mixes.

### Condiments

low sodium condiments – catsup, chili sauce, mustard, pickles, Tabasco sauce, low-sodium baking powder.

### Snack Items

unsalted snacks – nuts, seeds, pretzels, popcorn.

## Foods to Avoid

### Fats

Regular butter or margarine; commercial salad dressings.

### Sweets and desserts

Prepared mixes, store-bought pies, cakes, or muffins; baked goods made with baking powder or soda.

### Beverages

Commercially softened water; beverages and foods made with commercially softened water; sports drinks; canned tomato or vegetable juice, unless salt-free.

### Soups

Regular bouillon, broth or consommé; regular canned or dried commercial soups.

### Seasonings

Seasoning salts - garlic, celery, onion, seasoned, rock, kosher; and any other seasoning salt. Sodium compounds such as MSG – Accent, Adobo, Sazon.

### Condiments

Regular condiments - catsup, chili sauce, mustard, pickles, relishes, olives, horseradish, gravy & sauce mixes, barbecue sauce, soy and teriyaki sauce, Worcestershire and steak sauce.

### Snack Items

Salted nuts, seeds, pretzels, and popcorn. All regular commercially prepared convenience foods.

# Low Potassium Food

Some of the medications you take to manage your heart failure can raise or lower your potassium levels. It is important that you maintain a normal potassium level. Very high or low potassium can have serious side effects.

Your heart failure provider may ask to limit foods that are high in potassium if the potassium levels in your blood are high from the medications.

Potassium rich foods include:

- Bananas
- Oranges and other citrus fruits
- Fruit juices: including orange, pineapple, and grapefruit
- Avocados
- Potatoes, sweet potatoes
- Spinach
- Dried beans
- Salt substitutes made with potassium

**\* You only need to avoid these foods if specifically directed by your heart failure provider.**



## Reading Food Labels

The “Nutrition Facts” label lists sodium in milligrams (mg). When reading labels, try to choose foods that contain less than 300 mg of sodium per serving.

Main-dish entrees, such as TV dinners, should contain less than 600 mg of sodium per serving.

Always check to see how many servings are in the box or can. If you eat a portion greater than a serving size, you end up with more salt intake than is listed on the label.

Nutrition Facts			
Serving Size 1/2 cup (114g)			
Servings Per Container: 4			
Amount Per Serving			
Calories 90		Calories from Fat 30	
% Daily Value*			
Total Fat	3 g	5%	
Saturated Fat	0g	0%	
Cholesterol	0mg	0%	
Sodium	300mg	13%	
Total Carbohydrate	13g	4%	
Dietary Fiber	3g	12%	
Sugars 3g			
Protein 3g			
Vitamin A 80%		Vitamin C 60%	
Calcium	4%	Iron	4%
* 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		300g	375g
Fiber		25g	30g
Calories per gram:			
Fat	9	Carbohydrate	4
		Protein	4

## Food labeling definitions

### Terms

Sodium (salt) free

Very low sodium

Low sodium

Reduced sodium

Unsalted

### Sodium Per Serving

Less than 5 mg

35mg or less

140 mg or less

At least 75% reduction of sodium

No salt added during processing



## Limiting Fluids

Many heart failure providers suggest that people with heart failure limit their total fluid to 8 cups (2 quarts or 64 oz.) per day. This includes fluids taken with medicines. Here are some examples of fluids and foods that count as part of your fluid total:

### Fluids

---

Water, Juice, Coffee, Tea,  
Soda, Ice cubes, Soup, Milk.

### Foods

---

Yogurt, Pudding, Ice Cream, Jell-O  
Juices in fruits (1 orange or 1/2  
Grapefruit counts as 4 oz. of fluid)

#### To help you measure

1 cup = 8 oz. = 240 cc

4 cups = 32 oz. = 1 qt. = 1000 cc = 1 liter

8 cups = 64 oz. = 2 qts. = 2000 cc = 2 liters

1 ml = 1 cc

1oz. = 30 cc



## What can I do when I get thirsty?

- Being thirsty is very common. This does not mean that your body needs more fluid. You have to be careful not to replace the fluid that diuretics have helped your body to get rid of.
- Use ice chips or just rinse your mouth.
- Freeze juice in an ice cube tray.
- Use a lemon wedge, hard candies, chewing gum, frozen grapes or strawberries instead of drinking.
- Remember to save some fluids to take with your medicine.
- Many people find it helpful to fill a pitcher with 48 ounces of water in the morning. Each time you drink any fluid, pour that amount out of the pitcher. When the pitcher is empty, you have used up all of the fluids you should have for the day.

## Caffeine and High Salt Drinks

Limit the intake of coffee, black tea or soda with caffeine.

Avoid drinks high in sodium, such as tomato or vegetable juice.



## Exercise

Exercise helps to condition your heart muscle and gives you more energy to perform activities through out the day. Be sure to check with your heart failure provider before beginning an exercise program.

Notify your heart failure provider of dizziness, difficulty breathing, heart palpitations or extreme fatigue that occurs with exercise. Do not exercise immediately after a heavy meal. Avoid extreme temperatures. Do not exercise if you are already excessively fatigued or feeling poorly.

**Aerobic exercise** is the best type of exercise for you. This includes:

- Walking  
(even walking around the block or yard counts as exercise)
- Biking
- Swimming
- Dancing

**Cardiac Rehabilitation** is a safe and effective way to exercise. An individualized exercise program is based on the results of an exercise test and is modified to fit your needs. Cardiac rehabilitation programs must be ordered by your heart failure provider and are not always covered by health insurance.

**Sexual Activity** is certainly a form of exercise. Despite your illness, you may continue to enjoy sexual activity with a few extra considerations. Try to be well rested. Set aside a block of time. Be sure that the room temperature is comfortable. Avoid heavy meals and alcohol. Abstain if you are otherwise not feeling well. Discuss any anxieties that you may have with your partner.

Be aware that some medications and heart failure in general may affect your sexual desire and performance. If this is the case, you should speak to your heart failure provider.



# Exercise Tips

## Do . . .

Wear comfortable clothes and soft sole shoes with laces or sneakers.

Start slowly. Gradually build up to 30 minutes of activity, three or four times per week (or whatever your heart failure provider recommends). If you are unable to exercise for 30 minutes straight, try two 15-minute sessions to meet your goal.

Exercise at the same time of day so it becomes a regular part of your lifestyle. For example, you might walk every Monday, Wednesday and Friday from noon to 12:30 p.m. However, don't skip your exercise if you can't make the scheduled time.

Exercise with a friend.

## Don't . . .

Don't get discouraged if you have to stop due to decompensation of your heart failure. Gradually start again and work up to your old pace.

Don't do exercises that require holding your breath, bearing down or sudden bursts of energy.

Don't engage in any activity that causes chest pain, severe shortness of breath, dizziness or light-headedness. If these happen, stop what you are doing right away.

Don't exercise right after meals or in extreme temperatures.



## Managing Stress

Emotional stress and anxiety make the heart work harder, which can make symptoms worse. That is why patients and their caregivers should work together to keep stress under control.

Learn to accept things you can't change. You do not have to solve all of life's problems.

Don't use smoking, drinking, overeating, drugs or caffeine to cope with stress. These will actually make things worse.

Learn to say no. Do not promise too much. Give yourself enough time to get things done.

Join a support group — maybe for people with heart disease, for women, for men, for retired persons or some other group with which you identify.

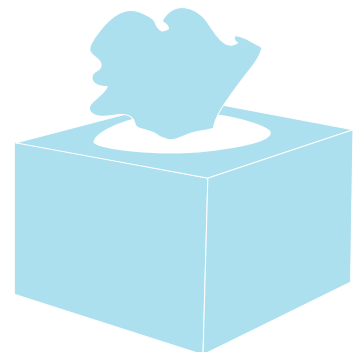
Consider a mental health professional or clergy to help you manage stress.

## Avoiding Colds and Flu

Get a yearly influenza vaccine. Ask your heart failure provider about the pneumococcal vaccine to guard against the most common form of bacterial pneumonia.

As much as possible, avoid anyone who has a cold or the flu.

Stay out of crowds during the height of the flu season. If you are around someone who has a cold or flu, be sure to wash your hands.



# The Effects of Smoking

Smokers who have heart failure can automatically eliminate a major source of stress on the heart by quitting. Each puff of nicotine temporarily increases the heart rate and blood pressure. People who quit smoking are more likely to have their heart failure symptoms improve.

Keep busy doing things that make it hard to smoke, like working in the yard, washing dishes and being more active.

Find a substitute to reach for instead of a cigarette. Try a hard candy.

Make it known to family and friends that you need to quit smoking and could really use their support.

If your husband, wife, son or daughter smokes, ask them to quit with you.

Ask your heart failure provider about smoking cessation programs.

Also discuss using medications that can help you quit smoking.

# Other Ways to Improve Heart Function

Lose weight if you are too heavy. The heart does not have to beat as hard to send blood to all parts of a slim body.

Avoid hard exercise and lifting heavy objects to prevent sudden pumping demands on your heart. Your heart failure provider may ask that you take daily walks or join a cardiac rehab program. Over time this may strengthen your heart muscle.

Wear clothing that permit good blood flow in the legs. Garters, hose with tight tops may slow blood flow to your legs and cause clots.

Avoid temperature extremes. The body works harder to keep body temperature normal when you are too hot or too cold.

Try to stay away from people who have colds or the flu. Ask your heart failure provider if you should have a yearly flu shot and the one-time pneumonia shot.

Talk with your heart failure provider about how much alcohol (if any) is OK for you. Since alcohol weakens the heart, heart failure may improve if you stop drinking.

# Devices and Advanced Therapies for Heart Failure

## Devices

Your heart failure provider may advise you that you qualify for implantable device therapies that could help to treat your heart or treat irregular heart rhythms that you may be at risk for. These devices include:

**Implantable cardiac defibrillators (ICDs):** ICDs are small devices which are placed usually beneath the skin in the upper chest area. They have wires which pass through a blood vessel directly into the right side of your heart. These wires can act as pacemakers. Additionally, they can monitor your heart's electrical rhythm.

Should you experience a life threatening irregular rhythm, the device can intervene to help restore a normal heart rhythm. ICDs have been shown to save lives in select patients with heart failure.

**Cardiac resynchronization therapy (biventricular pacemakers [CRT]):** though similar in size and placement compared with an ICD, these devices have an extra wire which is passed into the left side of the heart. This enables the device to help coordinate or "synchronize" the pumping or contracting of the right and left sides of your heart, thereby improving the heart's performance. In select patients, these devices have been shown to help improve heart function and save lives. Often, a CRT device and an ICD can be combined into one device (CRT-D).

Some ICDs and CRT devices have the ability to help your heart failure provider assess fluid in your body, as well as indicators of how you are doing (such as your activity level, heart rates and rhythms and pacemaker performance). If your device has this capability, it may be checked during your office visit or from a special set up at your home. Your provider will let you know if you have this type of device and will advise you on how he or she can gain access to this information remotely (from home).

**Left ventricular assist devices (LVAD):** this device is a heart pump which is implanted during surgery. It can take over the pumping needs of the left side of the heart. The device (inside of the chest and abdomen) is attached to a cord that exits the body and connects with a battery supply pack. LVADs are reserved for use in patients with very advanced heart failure. Not all patients need or qualify for this type of advanced device.

## Heart Transplantation

Heart transplants are considered for select patients who have very advanced heart failure. You will be advised by your heart failure provider if he/she believes that you should undergo an evaluation to determine your eligibility of heart transplant.



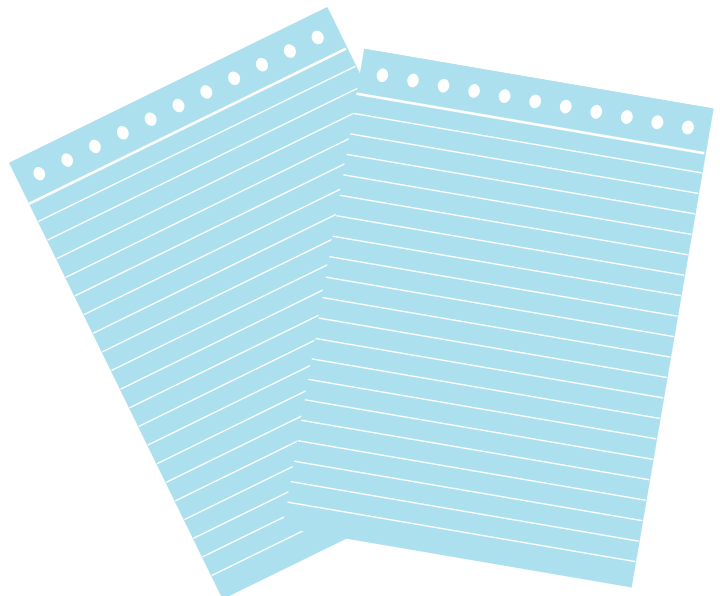
# Planning for the Future

A legal document called an Advance Directive can guide your family and medical team in medical emergencies if you are unable to make known your wishes. An advance Directive can include:

- A living will
- A medical durable power of attorney (someone you appoint to make medical decisions)
- Cardiopulmonary (CPR) instructions
- Discussions with your family should be held on your feelings about organ donation.

Taking control of your illness and following the guidelines discussed in this booklet can contribute to many years of enjoyable living.

Remember, take time to enjoy your life. Stay close to family and friends who will give you support and encouragement.



# Heart Failure Diary

Keeping a heart failure diary is one way you can help manage your heart failure at home.

Track your weight:

- Weigh yourself every morning after you wake up and before your eat.
- Record your weight on the calendar.
- Call your heart failure provider if you gain 3 or more pounds over 3 days.

Track your heart failure symptoms:

- With your heart failure provider, describe what a “good” day, “bad” day and “worse” day is for you.
- Call your heart failure provider if you are having a bad or worse day.

● A good day is:


Example: usual activity without shortness of breath, no swelling

● A bad day is:





Example: new swelling, shortness of breath with activity, worse fatigue







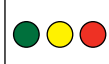
















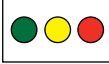
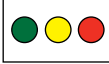
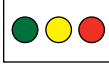
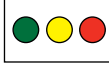
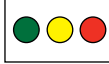
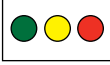
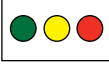
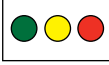
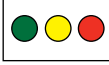
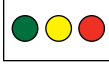
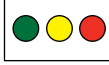
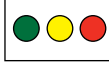
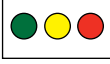
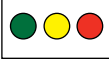
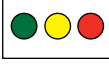
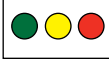
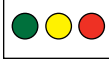
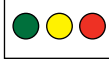
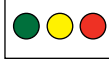
● A worse day is:




Example: shortness of breath at rest; more than 2 pound weight gain from yesterday.

# Month \_\_\_\_\_

Track your heart failure symptoms: Mark color daily

 Good day    Bad day    Worse day

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<input type="checkbox"/> 	<input type="checkbox"/> 	<input type="checkbox"/> 	<input type="checkbox"/> 	<input type="checkbox"/> 	<input type="checkbox"/> 	<input type="checkbox"/> 
Weight:	Weight:	Weight:		Weight:		Weight:
<input type="checkbox"/> 	<input type="checkbox"/> 	<input type="checkbox"/> 	<input type="checkbox"/> 	<input type="checkbox"/> 	<input type="checkbox"/> 	<input type="checkbox"/> 
Weight:	Weight:	Weight:	Weight:	Weight:	Weight:	Weight:
<input type="checkbox"/> 	<input type="checkbox"/> 	<input type="checkbox"/> 	<input type="checkbox"/> 	<input type="checkbox"/> 	<input type="checkbox"/> 	<input type="checkbox"/> 
Weight:	Weight:	Weight:	Weight:	Weight:	Weight:	Weight:
<input type="checkbox"/> 	<input type="checkbox"/> 	<input type="checkbox"/> 	<input type="checkbox"/> 	<input type="checkbox"/> 	<input type="checkbox"/> 	<input type="checkbox"/> 
Weight:	Weight:	Weight:	Weight:	Weight:	Weight:	Weight:
<input type="checkbox"/> 	<input type="checkbox"/> 	<input type="checkbox"/> 	<input type="checkbox"/> 	<input type="checkbox"/> 	<input type="checkbox"/> 	<input type="checkbox"/> 
Weight:	Weight:	Weight:	Weight:	Weight:	Weight:	Weight:
<input type="checkbox"/> 	<input type="checkbox"/> 	<input type="checkbox"/> 	<input type="checkbox"/> 	<input type="checkbox"/> 	<input type="checkbox"/> 	<input type="checkbox"/> 
Weight:	Weight:	Weight:	Weight:	Weight:	Weight:	Weight:

  = call your heart failure provider immediately

Patient: \_\_\_\_\_

NYHA Class: \_\_\_\_\_

**Call 911 for chest pain unrelieved by nitroglycerin, extreme shortness of breath, or loss of consciousness**




Heart Failure Provider: \_\_\_\_\_







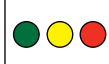
















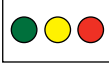
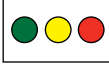
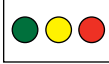
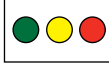
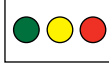
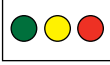
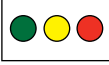
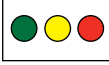
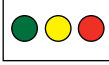
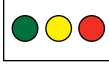
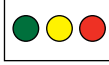
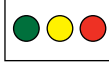
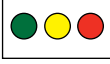
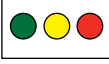
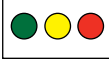
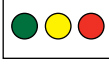
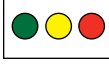
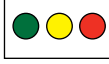
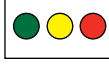
Telephone Number: \_\_\_\_\_





# Month \_\_\_\_\_

Track your heart failure symptoms: Mark color daily

 Good day    Bad day    Worse day

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<input type="checkbox"/> 	<input type="checkbox"/> 	<input type="checkbox"/> 	<input type="checkbox"/> 	<input type="checkbox"/> 	<input type="checkbox"/> 	<input type="checkbox"/> 
Weight:	Weight:	Weight:	Weight:	Weight:	Weight:	Weight:
<input type="checkbox"/> 	<input type="checkbox"/> 	<input type="checkbox"/> 	<input type="checkbox"/> 	<input type="checkbox"/> 	<input type="checkbox"/> 	<input type="checkbox"/> 
Weight:	Weight:	Weight:	Weight:	Weight:	Weight:	Weight:
<input type="checkbox"/> 	<input type="checkbox"/> 	<input type="checkbox"/> 	<input type="checkbox"/> 	<input type="checkbox"/> 	<input type="checkbox"/> 	<input type="checkbox"/> 
Weight:	Weight:	Weight:	Weight:	Weight:	Weight:	Weight:
<input type="checkbox"/> 	<input type="checkbox"/> 	<input type="checkbox"/> 	<input type="checkbox"/> 	<input type="checkbox"/> 	<input type="checkbox"/> 	<input type="checkbox"/> 
Weight:	Weight:	Weight:	Weight:	Weight:	Weight:	Weight:
<input type="checkbox"/> 	<input type="checkbox"/> 	<input type="checkbox"/> 	<input type="checkbox"/> 	<input type="checkbox"/> 	<input type="checkbox"/> 	<input type="checkbox"/> 
Weight:	Weight:	Weight:	Weight:	Weight:	Weight:	Weight:
<input type="checkbox"/> 	<input type="checkbox"/> 	<input type="checkbox"/> 	<input type="checkbox"/> 	<input type="checkbox"/> 	<input type="checkbox"/> 	<input type="checkbox"/> 
Weight:	Weight:	Weight:	Weight:	Weight:	Weight:	Weight:

  = call your heart failure provider immediately

Patient: \_\_\_\_\_

NYHA Class: \_\_\_\_\_

**Call 911 for chest pain unrelieved by nitroglycerin, extreme shortness of breath, or loss of consciousness**

Heart Failure Provider: \_\_\_\_\_

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

# Important Telephone Numbers

	Name	Address	Phone #
Primary Care Provider			
Cardiologist			
Heart Failure Physician			
Heart Failure Nurse Practitioner			
Other Specialist			
Other Specialist			
Pharmacy			













**Montefiore Einstein  
Center for Heart & Vascular Care**

111 East 210th Street  
Bronx, New York 10467