

Living With Heart Failure: Your Daily Guide

Medical-Surgical · Cardiovascular

Heart failure means your heart does not pump or fill as well as it should. These steps help you notice fluid buildup and get help early.

Weigh yourself every morning

- Weigh after using the bathroom and before breakfast.
- Use the same scale and wear similar clothes. Write down your weight.
- **Call for a gain of 2 to 3 pounds in one day or 5 pounds in one week.**
- Your care team's different limit, if given: _____.

Eat less salt

- Your sodium limit: _____ mg a day.
- Check sodium and serving size on food labels.
- Limit canned soup, deli meat, frozen meals, and salty snacks.
- Use herbs or lemon. Ask before using salt substitutes.

Follow your fluid plan

- Limit fluids only if your care team tells you to.
- Your daily fluid limit, if prescribed: _____.
- Count drinks, ice, soup, gelatin, and ice pops.

Take your medicines

- Take medicines as directed, even when you feel well.
- Take a once-daily water pill in the morning.

- Stand up slowly. Keep your blood test appointments.
- Avoid ibuprofen and naproxen unless your provider approves them.

Move and rest

- Follow your activity plan. Rest between tasks.
- Ask about cardiac rehab, a supervised exercise program.
- Stop smoking. Ask about alcohol limits and vaccines.

Call your provider today if you have

- Weight gain above your limit or more swelling
- More shortness of breath during usual activities
- A need for more pillows or waking short of breath
- A cough that will not go away

Call 911 or your local emergency number if you have

- New or lasting chest pain or pressure
- Severe trouble breathing, even at rest
- Fainting, sudden confusion, or blue or gray lips
- Pink, foamy spit when you cough

This handout supports, not replaces, advice from your own nurse or doctor.

Online: nclexpace.com/patient-education/heart-failure-self-care/patient

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