

Important information for patients with heart failure

Call your doctor if you experience any of the following:

- ✓ increasing shortness of breath
- ✓ lack of sleep due to shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- ✓ swelling or increased swelling in your legs and feet
- ✓ fainting or near blackouts
- ✓ chest discomfort (heart pain) that is more frequent or more severe

If you experience chest discomfort (heart pain) that is not promptly relieved by rest, take nitroglycerin every five minutes for three doses.

Your doctor's name

Your doctor's office number

If the chest discomfort (heart pain) is not relieved by nitroglycerin or if the chest discomfort lasts longer than 20 minutes, call 911.

You may be having a heart attack.

For additional information see

OMPRO

www.ompro.org/beneficiary/chf.html

Congestive Heart Failure:

A Patient's Guide

Heart Failure Society of America

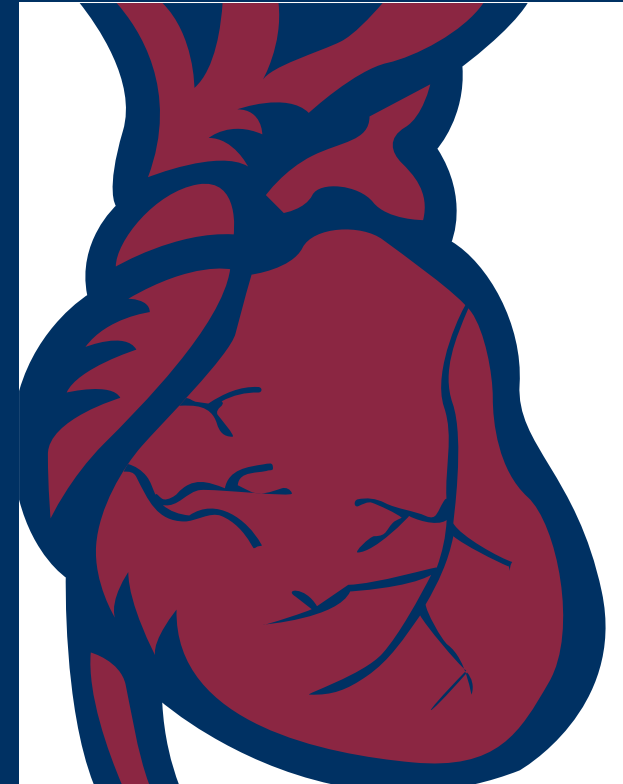
www.abouthf.org

If you have questions about the materials in this brochure, call your doctor's office.



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How to Care for Your Heart If You Have Heart Failure



Taking care of yourself increases your chances of living a long and healthy life. Here is information about ways you can take care of your heart.

What is heart failure?

Heart failure occurs when your heart is not able to pump as much blood as your body needs. This inability to pump enough blood may be caused by heart muscle weakness or stiffness or by a “bad” valve.

No matter what caused your heart failure, there are things you can do to increase the chances that you will live a long and healthy life.

What can I do to increase my chances of living a long and healthy life?

Follow your doctor’s recommendations and use this checklist to set goals and make changes in your life. Keep your goals simple and realistic to help you reach them.

Salt, alcohol, and tobacco

- ✓ Reduce your salt intake. Avoid table salt and prepared foods. Do not use a salt substitute unless you discuss it with your doctor first. Follow any low-salt diet instructions from your doctor.
- ✓ Limit the amount of alcohol you drink. Women should consume no more than one drink a day; men should consume no more than two drinks a day.
- ✓ Avoid using tobacco products such as cigarettes and chewing tobacco.

Exercise and weight

- ✓ Follow your doctor’s exercise recommendations.
- ✓ Weigh yourself daily after urinating and before eating breakfast. Record your weight in a diary or on a calendar. If you gain weight unexpectedly over several days or weeks, contact the doctor treating you for heart failure.

Medications

- ✓ Take your medications as directed. Notify your doctor if you can’t afford your medications.
- ✓ Review your medications each time you visit the doctor’s office (take your pill bottles). Some medications can be harmful for patients with heart failure. Check with your doctor’s office before taking over-the-counter medications or medications for pain or arthritis. Tylenol or generic acetaminophen is okay.

Follow-up

- ✓ Stay in touch with your doctor’s office. Keep your follow-up appointments; they are important opportunities for your doctor to evaluate your health.
- ✓ Complete your Medic Alert® form and have “Heart Failure” imprinted on the back of your identification bracelet. Your Medic Alert® identification informs healthcare providers about your condition.