

STRATEGIES & ADAPTATIONS TO IMPROVE MEDICATION MANAGEMENT AND DAILY WEIGH INS

Methods for Adapted weighing

- Use digital, easy to read scale
- Use scales with a hand holder or hold lightly to a firm surface for safety
- Get as close to the scale as possible before transferring
- If using an ambulation device such as walker, keep it in front for support

Tips for Medication Schedule adherence

- Establish a daily routine for taking medications
- Use a planner or checklist
- Use an alarm to help you remember
- Pillboxes can be programmed to provide audible message/reminders
- Store your medications in one commonly used and highly visible area

Tips for Identifying, Obtaining and Handling Medications

- Make sure to compile a complete list of all the medications you take and keep it handy
- Work with your pharmacist to obtain a pillbox tailored to your needs and abilities
- Use label reader application or magnifier for easier read of medication labels
- Use containers that are easier to open
- Use medication containers opening gadgets or tools
- Check with your occupational therapist for dexterity, grip and pinch strength exercises to handle medication containers
- If you have tremors, rest your arm on the table to stabilize it while retrieving medications

Energy Conservation Techniques for performance of daily activities or community activities

- **Plan and Prioritize**
 - Choose and focus on the most important activities to do each day
 - Gather necessary items before beginning a task
 - Reserve the most difficult tasks for the time of the day when you are most energetic
 - Avoid outdoor activities when it is too hot
 - Plan to be well hydrated
 - Use comfortable, easy to don/doff clothing
- **Change/Modify**
 - Eliminate unnecessary steps or trips to perform a task
 - Breakdown activities into short time periods of manageable physical demands

- Alternate activity with rest periods
 - Alternate sitting with standing
 - Use cart, apron or walker basket to transport items
 - Use lighter weight containers or materials
 - Use equipment or devices to assist you
- **Re-arrange**
 - Organize the materials you need most often to be at easy reach
 - Organize your living spaces for easy access

Useful Equipment or gadgets to facilitate your medication adherence and daily tasks

- Elastic shoe laces, shoe horn
- A reacher or grabber
- Handheld shower
- Shower bench or chair
- Electronic pillbox
- Electronic alarms or timers
- Medication container opening tools

Medication Schedule adherence:



Identifying, Obtaining and Handling Medications:



Adapted Weighting:



Energy Conservation Techniques:





10 Tips for Living With Heart Failure

- 1. Create a support team.**
- 2. Check and record your weight every day, along with a log of your daily blood pressure and exercise.**
- 3. Listen to your body and know when the condition might be getting worse.** For example, do you notice:
 - swelling
 - rapid weight gain
 - labored breathing, especially when lying down
 - being unable to concentrate
- 4. Report problems right away.** Stay connected with your heart failure team and report changes in weight or new symptoms.
- 5. Accept your new normal.** Stay connected to the things you love to do, even if it means you might need to participate in a different way or cut back a bit. It's OK if daily tasks seem to take longer.
- 6. Share your concerns.** For example, many people are scared about over-exerting their heart, but exercise is very important.
- 7. Take your medications exactly as directed.**
- 8. Ask about and take advantage of cardiac rehabilitation.**
- 9. Bring a trusted friend or family member to your appointments.**
- 10. Make sure you have a living will and advanced directives in place.**

Heart Failure: How to Limit Your Fluids



Sodium causes your body to hold extra fluid, making it harder for your heart to pump. Your doctor may prescribe a medicine to help get rid of excess fluid. This type of medicine is called a diuretic, or water pill. You may also need to limit liquids to help your body get rid of extra water and sodium.

Limiting fluids can help you feel better and lower your risk of having to go to the hospital.

Measuring your fluid intake

Your doctor will tell you how much fluid you should have each day. Usually, it will range from 4 to 8 cups a day, which is about 1 to 2 liters.

To help you with these amounts, here are some common household measures:

This amount of fluid:	is the same as:	and the same as:
1 tablespoon	½ fluid ounce (fl oz)	15 milliliters (mL)
½ cup	4 fl oz	About 120 mL
1 cup	8 fl oz	About 250 mL
4 cups (1 quart)	32 fl oz	About 1,000 mL, or 1 liter

So if you are allowed 8 cups of fluid a day, that is the same as 2,000 mL or 2 liters.

It is important to know how much fluid your regular glasses hold. You can find out by filling a glass with water and then pouring it into a measuring cup. Once you know this, you will not have to measure every time.

Some foods contain a lot of fluid. Any food that will melt, that has a high water content, or that contains a lot of liquid should be measured and counted as part of your fluid intake. So that means you need to count ice cream, gelatin, ice, juicy fruits, and soup.

Tracking your fluid intake

One way to keep track of how much fluid you take in is to have an empty container that holds the amount of fluid you are allowed for the day.

- For example, if you are allowed 64 fl oz a day, you could keep a 2-liter pop bottle at hand. As you drink fluids, put an equal amount of water into the bottle until you reach your fluid limit. When the bottle is full, you have reached your fluid limit and should stop drinking.

Another way to track your fluid intake is to allow yourself 1 cup (8 fl oz) of fluid at each meal (3 meals x 8 oz = 24 fl oz). You can then fill a pitcher with water equal to the rest of your fluid allowance.

- For example, if you are allowed 48 fl oz (6 cups) of fluid a day, you could have 24 fl oz (3 cups) at mealtimes and then another 24 fl oz (3 cups) to drink at other times during the day. If you drink other beverages besides water, then you would need to pour out an equal amount of water from your container.

Common questions about limiting fluids

Does everyone with heart failure need to limit fluids?

No. Usually, just limiting sodium is enough to help your body get rid of extra fluids. Most people do not need to limit their fluids until heart failure is advanced or severe.

Why is limiting fluids important?

Too much fluid in your body can make it harder for your already-weakened heart to pump. This can make symptoms, such as swelling and shortness of breath, worse.

What can I do if I feel thirsty?

It is very important to limit your fluid to the level your doctor suggests. But that can be hard. If you feel thirsty, try chewing gum or sucking on a piece of hard candy, a breath mint, or pieces of frozen fruit like grapes or strawberries. If your lips feel dry, try lip balm. But stick with your program.

Can I have alcohol?

Alcohol can raise your blood pressure which makes your heart work harder, so it is not a good idea when you have heart failure. Since you are allowed only a limited amount of fluid each day, it is best to choose healthier fluids. Check with your doctor to see if you should avoid drinking alcohol.

Do you have any questions or concerns after reading this information? It's a good idea to write them down and take them to your next doctor visit.

Heart Failure: Living With the Disease



Heart failure occurs when your heart does not pump as much blood as your body needs. Failure does not mean that the heart has stopped pumping but rather that it is not pumping as well as it should.

Over time, this causes fluid buildup in your lungs and other parts of your body. Fluid buildup can cause shortness of breath, fatigue, swollen ankles, and other problems. There are many things you can do to take care of yourself at home. Take your medicines as your doctor tells you. Limit sodium (salt) in your diet, and check your weight every day.

It is important to learn to manage your heart failure. If you closely follow your doctor's treatment plan, you can feel better and live longer.

Take your medicines as directed

For your safety:

- Take your medicines exactly as prescribed. Do not stop or change your medicines without talking to your doctor first. Call your doctor if you think you are having a problem with your medicine.

- Do not take any vitamins, over-the-counter drugs, or herbal products unless you talk to your doctor first.
- Do not use nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) such as aspirin, ibuprofen, or naproxen, unless you talk to your doctor first. These drugs may make your heart failure worse.

Your treatment may include some of the following medicines:

- Angiotensin-converting enzyme (ACE) inhibitors can slow how heart failure progresses. They reduce the heart's workload, lower blood pressure, and reduce swelling.
- Angiotensin II receptor blockers (ARBs) work like ACE inhibitors. Your doctor may prescribe them instead of or along with ACE inhibitors.
- Diuretics, also called water pills, reduce swelling. Some (like spironolactone) block the effects of harmful substances that can make your heart failure worse.
- Digoxin reduces symptoms for some people who have heart failure.
- Beta-blockers can slow your heart rate and lower your blood pressure. They can also slow down the process of heart failure.
- Potassium supplements replace this important mineral that your body sometimes loses when you take diuretics.

Keep track of your symptoms

Keep a daily record of your symptoms. Write down any changes in how you feel, such as new or increased shortness of breath. Also record if your ankles are more swollen than usual and if you have to urinate in the night more often. Note anything that you ate or did that could have triggered these changes.

Take your list of symptoms with you to the doctor. Learn what signs may mean that your heart failure is getting worse. And know when to call your doctor or call for emergency help.

Check your weight every day

Weigh yourself at the same time each day, using the same scale. Do not wear shoes. Wear the same thing each time you weigh yourself, or wear nothing at all. Record your weight. Call your doctor if you notice a sudden weight gain. In general, call if you gain 3 pounds or more in 2 to 3 days. Your doctor can tell you how much weight gain is okay. A sudden weight gain may mean that your heart failure is getting worse.

Reduce sodium

Sodium causes your body to hold on to water, making it harder for your heart to pump. People get most of their sodium from salt in foods.

- Take the salt shaker off your table. Do not add salt when you cook. Slowly reducing salt will help you adjust to the taste.
- Read food labels on cans and food packages. They tell you how much sodium you get in one serving. Check the serving size. If you eat more than one serving, you are getting more sodium.

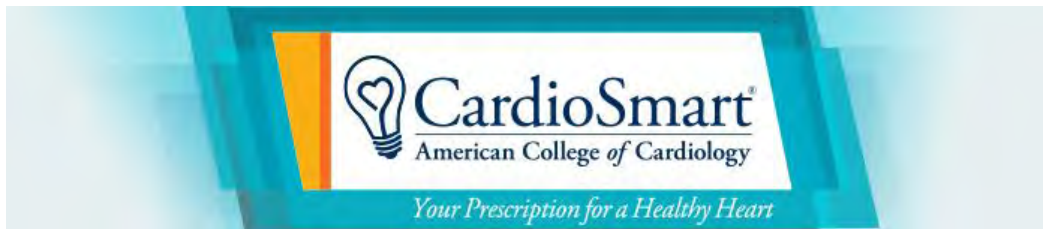
- Be aware that sodium can come in forms other than salt, including monosodium glutamate (MSG), sodium citrate, and sodium bicarbonate (baking soda). MSG is often added to Asian food. You can sometimes ask for food without MSG or salt.
- Use fresh or frozen ingredients instead of canned ones whenever you can. Choose low-sodium canned goods.
- Eat fewer processed foods and foods from restaurants, including fast foods.

If you have problems with self-care

It may be hard to deal with having heart failure. You may have trouble affording your medicines. You may have side effects from your medicines or trouble taking many different medicines for other health problems. Changing how you eat and cutting back on sodium may not be easy. Do not try to handle your problems on your own. Talk with your doctor if you are having problems managing your heart failure.

For more support, contact the American Heart Association at 1-800-AHA-USA1 (1-800-242-8721) or www.americanheart.org.

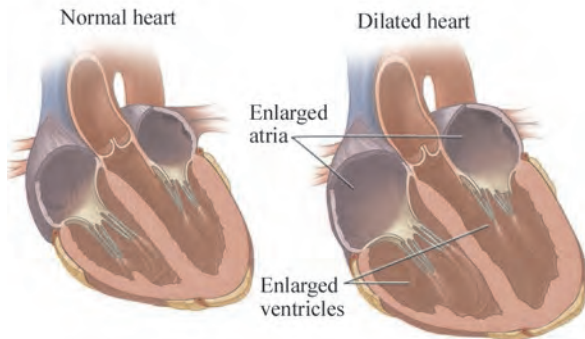




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Heart Failure: Understanding the Symptoms



Your body has an amazing ability to manage heart failure. It may do such a good job that you do not have symptoms in the early stages of the disease. But at some point, your body will no longer be able to keep up. The heart gets worn out and starts to work less efficiently. Then you will begin to have symptoms.

This information can help you understand your symptoms so you can work with your doctor to control heart failure.

What causes your symptoms

When you have heart failure, your heart gradually loses its ability to pump well. It tries to keep pumping the same amount of blood by beating harder and faster and getting bigger so it can hold more blood. The rest of your body tries to make up for heart failure by:

- Increasing the amount of fluid in your body.
- Sending more blood to your brain and other vital organs.

In time, your heart failure becomes worse and your body cannot keep up. Then, two major problems occur:

- Blood backs up into your lungs and other organs. This is called congestion.
- Your lungs and other organs do not get enough blood and oxygen. (Blood carries oxygen to your organs.)

When you have congestion:

- You may be short of breath when you are active.
- You may have swelling in your feet or ankles.
- Your shortness of breath may get worse when you lie flat, or it may wake you up at night.
- You may gain weight or have bloating.
- You may cough or wheeze.

When you are not getting enough oxygen:

- You may feel tired.
- You may have chest pain during exercise or in stressful situations.
- You may feel restless or confused.
- You may feel dizzy or lightheaded.

Tracking your symptoms

It is important to closely keep track of your symptoms and notice if they change. At your regular doctor visits, your doctor will ask you whether your symptoms have become worse. This helps your doctor see if your treatment is working or if it needs to change.

Make a habit of writing your daily symptoms in a notebook or symptom diary:

- Sudden weight gain. Weigh yourself each morning after you urinate but before you eat.
- Any change in your ability to exercise. For example, if you used to become short of breath after walking two blocks and now it only takes one block, your symptoms have gotten worse.

- Any new or worsening symptoms and what might have caused them (for example, a high-sodium meal or exercising too hard).
- What medicine or action you took that helped.

Be sure your doctor has given you an action plan for when to call for help if you have certain symptoms. If you need to call your doctor, have your symptom diary handy so you can give your doctor's office this information.

When to call your doctor

Call 911 if you have symptoms of sudden heart failure, such as:

- You have severe trouble breathing.
- You cough up pink, foamy mucus.
- You have a new irregular or rapid heartbeat.

Call your doctor now or seek immediate medical care if:

- You have new or increased shortness of breath (trouble getting your breath even when you are resting).
- You are dizzy or lightheaded, or you feel like you may faint.
- You have sudden weight gain, such as 3 pounds or more in 2 to 3 days.
- You have increased swelling in your legs, ankles, or feet.
- You are suddenly so tired or weak that you cannot do your usual activities.

Watch closely for changes in your health, and be sure to contact your doctor if you develop new symptoms.

Do you have any questions or concerns after reading this information? It's a good idea to write them down and take them to your next doctor visit.