



WELCOME

WELCOME TO UAB HOSPITAL IN BIRMINGHAM, ALA.

This booklet helps explain heart failure. It also includes information on taking care of yourself at home, with details about specific areas such as diet, exercise, medications, and managing stress.

We invite you to share this booklet with family and friends. Your doctors and nurses will discuss this information with you before you go home. Please feel free to ask questions and bring up any concerns.

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What is Heart Failure?

Heart failure is a very common condition in the United States. It affects over 550,000 Americans each year.

Heart failure means that the heart cannot keep up with the body's demands for oxygen and nutrients. It can be caused by having a heart attack, coronary heart disease, heart valves that are not working properly, or other problems affecting the heart. Things that can make heart failure worse include high blood pressure, diabetes, smoking, excessive alcohol or drug use, being overweight, and too much stress.

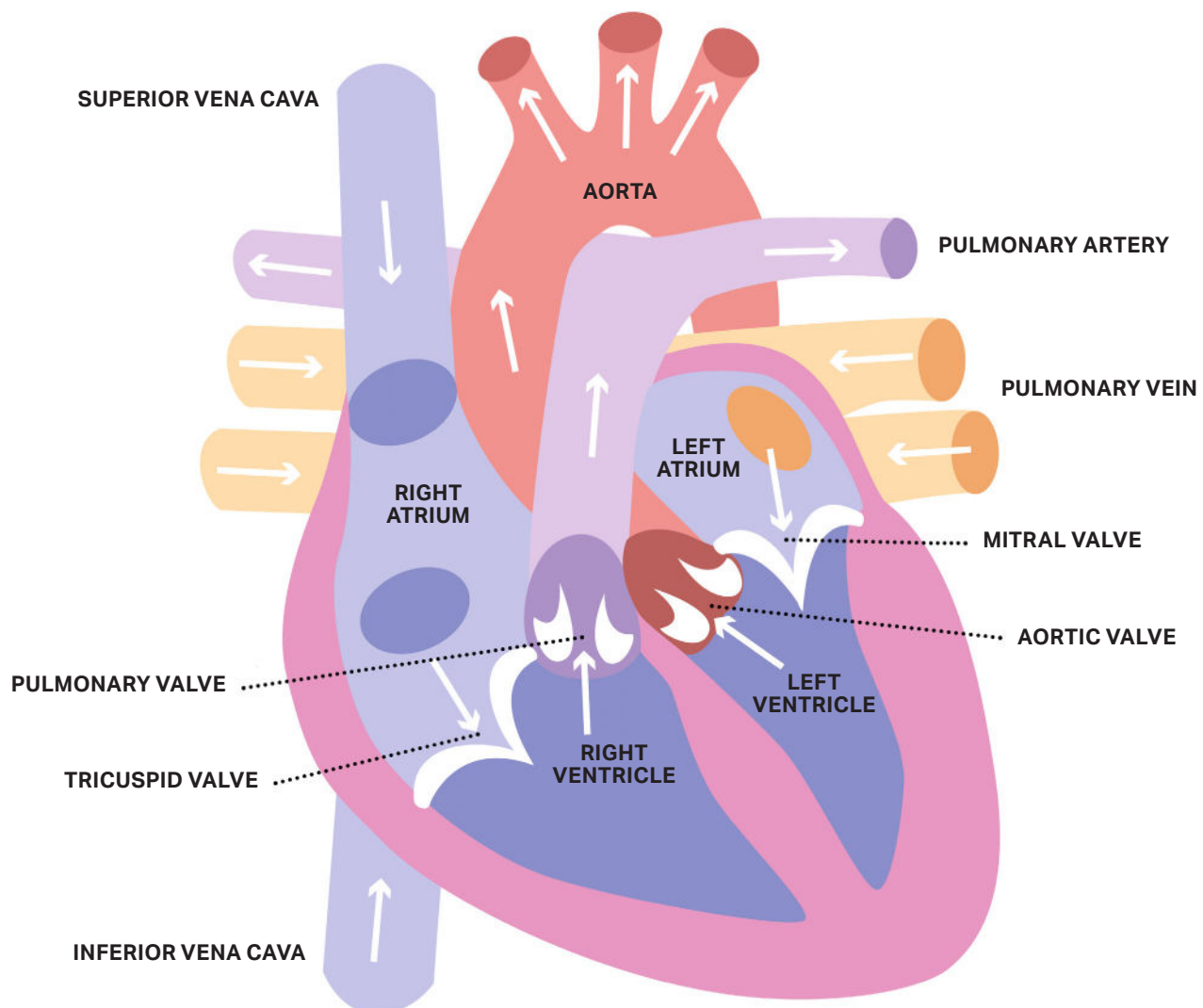
There are many things you can do to stay well and healthy if you have heart failure. This booklet will give you the tools to do just that.

How Does a Normal Heart Work?

The heart is a four-chamber organ in the middle of the chest, beneath the breastbone. Its purpose is to pump blood to the rest of the body, to keep all of the vital organs healthy. The heart receives its own blood supply from the coronary arteries, which surround the outside of the heart like a hand.

Chambers of the Heart

The right side of the heart receives blood from the body that is low in oxygen. It then moves the blood to the lungs to be refilled with oxygen before returning it to the left side of the heart. The left side is the pumping side, which moves blood out to the rest of the body, vital organs, and brain.





What Happens to the Heart with Heart Failure?

When heart failure occurs, it can affect the left or right side of the heart, or both sides.

When the right side of the heart cannot pump enough blood to the lungs, it can cause blood to back up in the body's veins, causing swelling in the abdomen, legs, and ankles.

The left side of the heart is a very strong muscle and moves blood filled with oxygen to the rest of the body.

There are 2 types of left-sided heart failure:

1. **Systolic heart failure**, also called *heart failure with reduced ejection fraction*, is a pumping problem where the left side of the heart does not pump blood well to the organs of the body.
2. **Diastolic heart failure**, also called *heart failure with preserved ejection fraction*, occurs when the heart is not able to relax between heartbeats.

Both types of heart failure can have similar results, but the causes and the actions are different. So, the treatment for the two types of heart failure may be different.



Health
Tip

There is no cure for heart failure. There are many things you can do to keep heart failure from getting worse and to prevent symptoms. This is why it is important to follow your recommended treatment plan.

Symptoms of Heart Failure

One way to take care of yourself is to keep a close eye on your symptoms and call your health care provider if they should get worse. Each person responds differently to heart failure. Some people have problems with holding on to fluid, and other people have problems with not enough blood flowing to the body. Some people may have trouble with both types of heart failure.

Symptoms of fluid retention include shortness of breath, ankle swelling, and fullness or bloating in the belly. Symptoms related to not enough blood flow to the body include fatigue (tiredness), feeling dizzy, aches and pains, and anxiety.

The chart below lists the most common symptoms and what causes them.

| Symptom | What Causes the Symptom |
|---|--|
| Shortness of breath | Fluid builds up in your lungs because your heart is not pumping as well as it should. |
| Fast heart rate | Fast heart rates or rapid pulse can be due to the reduced blood flow and the heart not pumping properly. |
| Increase in weight and/or swelling of ankles, legs or stomach (belly) | Fluid builds up in your body because your heart is not pumping as well as it should. |
| Dizziness | The blood flow to your body is reduced because your heart is not pumping as it should. |
| Coughing or wheezing | Fluid builds up in your lungs because your heart is not pumping as well as it should. |
| Loss of appetite | Fluid builds up in your stomach area because your heart is not pumping as well as it should. |
| Tiredness or weakness | The blood flow to your body is reduced because your heart is not pumping as it should. |

Monitor Your Symptoms

It is very important to monitor your symptoms. Learn the signs and symptoms of heart failure and report them to your health care provider when they occur. These symptoms include:

- Pain in the jaw, neck, or chest
- Increased shortness of breath
- Fatigue or being very tired
- Dizziness or fainting
- Swelling in feet, ankles, legs, or belly
- Racing heartbeat

You should report worsening symptoms of heart failure to your health care provider. It's also a good idea to keep a log or journal of how you feel each day.



Health
Tip

If you experience a symptom, especially if it is a new symptom such as shortness of breath, it is important for you to call your health care provider.



American
Heart
Association.

Self-Check Plan for HF Management



Excellent – Keep Up the Good Work!



☐ No new or worsening shortness of breath



☐ Physical activity level is normal for you



☐ No new swelling; feet, ankles and legs look normal for you



☐ Weight check stable
Weight: ____



☐ No chest pain

**GREAT!
CONTINUE:**



Daily
Weight
Check



Meds as
Directed



Low-
Sodium
Eating



Follow-up
Visits

Pay Attention – Use Caution!



☐ Dry, hacking cough



☐ Worsening shortness of breath with activity



☐ Increased swelling of legs, ankles and feet



☐ Sudden weight gain of more than 2–3 lbs in a 24-hour period (or 5 lbs in a week)



☐ Discomfort or swelling in the abdomen



☐ Trouble sleeping

CHECK IN!

Your symptoms may indicate:



A need to contact your doctor or health care team



A need for a change in medications

Medical Alert – Warning!



☐ Frequent dry, hacking cough



☐ Shortness of breath at rest



☐ Increased discomfort or swelling in the lower body



☐ Sudden weight gain of more than 2–3 lbs in a 24-hour period (or 5 lbs in a week)



☐ New or worsening dizziness, confusion, sadness or depression



☐ Loss of appetite



☐ Increased trouble sleeping; cannot lie flat

WARNING! You need to be evaluated right away.



Call your physician or call **911**

heart.org/HF

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Diet and Heart Failure

Lowering the Amount of Sodium (Salt) in Your Diet

Restricting or eating less salt (sodium) in your diet is a way to manage your heart failure. Too much salt in your diet causes you to retain fluid and can lead to swelling and shortness of breath.

Your health care provider will tell you how much sodium you can have in one day. Most of the time, you will need to stay on a restricted diet that limits your sodium intake to 2,000 mg per day.

Just because you need to watch the sodium in your diet doesn't mean you can't enjoy food. Food is a part of everyday life, the center of social events, and something that brings great pleasure.

You can reduce sodium in your diet by doing the following:

- Stop adding salt to the food you are cooking or eating.
- Buy fresh or frozen meats or fish. Do not use meats with sauces or marinades.
- Eat fresh or frozen fruits and vegetables.
- Try to avoid fast food. Ask about sodium content when eating out.
- Be sure to read food labels to help limit your salt intake.

Food Labels

Reading labels will become an important part of managing your heart failure.

Nutrition Facts

8 servings per container

Serving size 2/3 cup (55g)

Amount per serving

Calories 230

% Daily Value*

Total Fat 8g 10%

Saturated Fat 1g 5%

Trans Fat 0g

Cholesterol 0mg 0%

Sodium 160mg 7%

Total Carbohydrate 37g 13%

Dietary Fiber 4g 14%

Total Sugars 12g

Includes 10g Added Sugars 20%

Protein 3g


Vitamin D 2mcg 10%


Calcium 260mg 20%


Iron 8mg 45%

Potassium 240mg 6%

* The % Daily Value (DV) tells you how much a nutrient in a serving of food contributes to a daily diet. 2,000 calories a day is used for general nutrition advice.

- 

Be sure to pay attention to the stated serving size.
- 

Look at the amount of calories per serving. In this label, a serving size is 2/3 cup and has 230 calories.
- 

Read labels to find out how much sodium is in your food.

| If the food label says | One serving of the product has |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| Sodium-free, salt-free, or no sodium | Less than 5 mg of sodium and no ingredient that is sodium chloride or contains sodium |
| Very low sodium | 35 mg or less of sodium |
| Low sodium | 140 mg or less of sodium |
| Reduced or less sodium | At least 25% less sodium than the regular product |
| Light or lite in sodium | At least 50% less sodium than the regular product |
| Lightly salted | 50% less sodium than normally added |
| No salt added or unsalted | No salt added during processing (does not mean product is sodium-free) |

Source: American Heart Association, Food Packaging Claims

Diet and Heart Failure

This chart will help you decide which foods are low and high in sodium.

| High sodium (salt) | Low sodium (salt) |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potato chips, pretzels • Crackers with salt on top • Instant hot cereals • Pizza | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whole grain breads • Rice • Pasta • Cooked hot cereals |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Canned vegetables • Pickles • Vegetables with sauces • Canned soups | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fresh vegetables • Frozen plain vegetables • Low-sodium canned soups |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Processed or dried fruits | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fresh fruits |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Buttermilk • Processed cheese | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Milk • Yogurt |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Smoked, cured or salted meats • Lunch meat • Canned meats | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fresh meats, chicken, fish, or seafood |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bottled salad dressing • Ketchup, soy sauce, mayonnaise • Barbeque sauce | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vegetable, olive, or sunflower oil |

Restricting the Amount of Fluid You Drink

Your doctor may tell you to limit your daily fluid intake.

Extra fluid may cause weight gain and makes your heart work harder. To reduce the demand on your heart, your doctor may ask you to decrease the amount of fluids in your diet. Fluid limits are different for everyone. In most cases, fluids are limited to 1.5 to 2 liters a day.

Usual Fluid Calculations

2 liters = 2,000 cc or ml; ½ gallon; 8 cups;
half-gallon milk jug; large soda bottle

1½ liter = 1,500 cc or ml; 6 cups;
50 ounce bottle or jug

1 liter = 1,000 cc or ml; 1 quart; 4 cups
32 ounce soda bottle; patient water jug

1 cup = 240 cc or ml; 8 ounces

- If you are restricted to 2 liters (2,000 ml) of fluid, that is equal to about 8 cups of water.
- If you are restricted to 1 liter (1,000 ml) of fluid, that is equal to about 4 cups of water.

Examples of fruits with high fluid content:

- 1 ¼ cup of watermelon or cantaloupe = 6 fluid ounces
- 1 orange or ½ grapefruit = 4 fluid ounces



Did You Know?

Foods that count as a fluid include ice, popsicles, Jell-O, sherbet, ice cream, yogurt, applesauce, soup, and pudding.

Healthier Choices for Everyday Meals

The following chart will help you choose foods that are better for you:

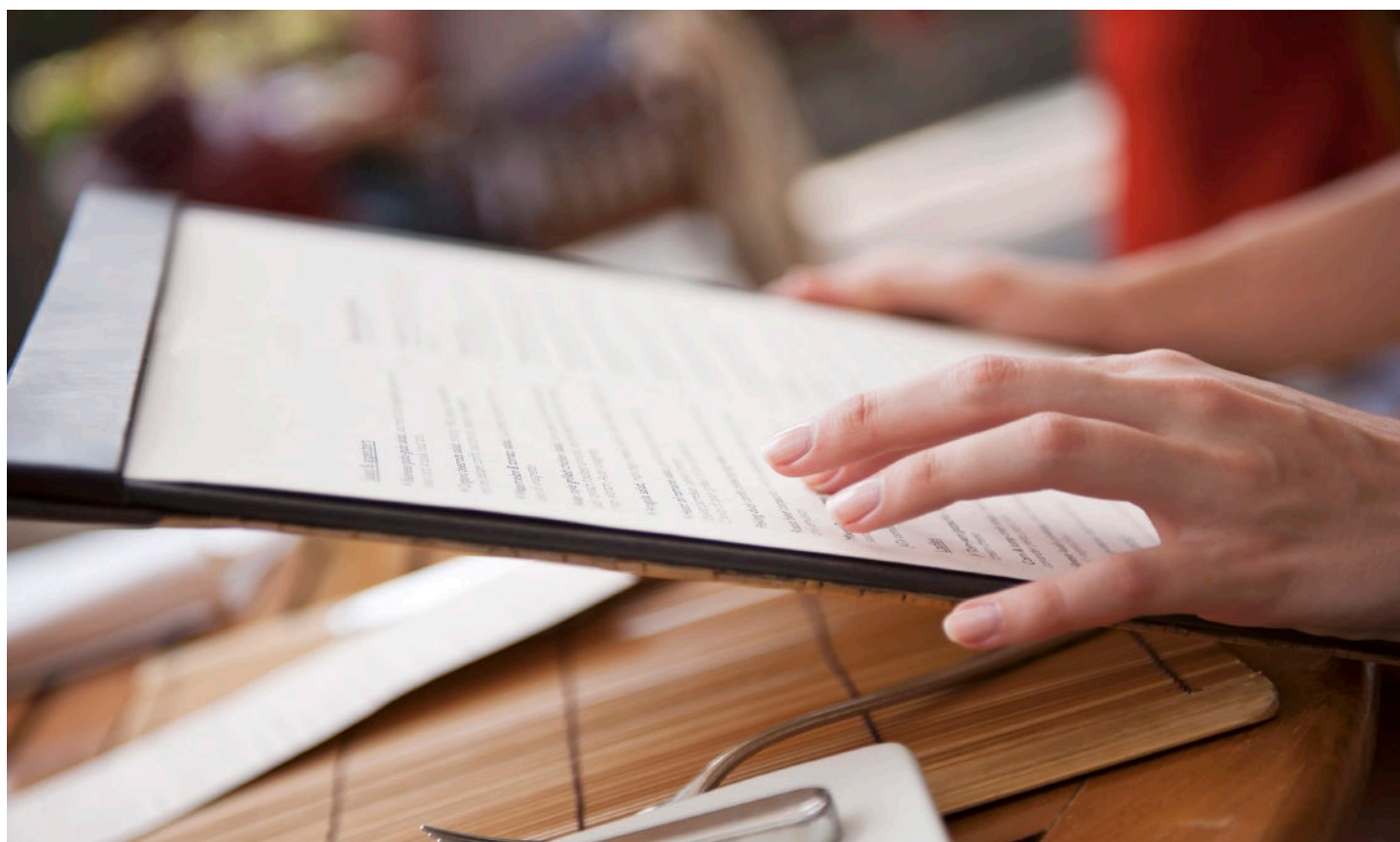
| Food Group | Recommended Foods | Foods Not Recommended |
|-------------------------------------|---|--|
| Grains | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Most breads, as long as they are not topped with salt (yeast breads usually have less sodium than those made with baking soda) Many cold cereals, especially shredded wheat, bran flakes and puffed rice or wheat Cooked cereals, pastas, rice and other starches made without salt | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bread/crackers topped with salt Cereals with more than 300 mg sodium per serving Biscuits, cornbread, and other "quick" breads prepared with baking soda Bread crumbs or stuffing mix from a store (homemade is ok if from a low-sodium recipe) |
| Vegetables | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fresh and frozen vegetables without added sauces, salt, or sodium Homemade soups (salt-free or low-sodium) Low-sodium or sodium-free canned vegetables and soups | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Canned vegetables (unless they are salt-free) Vegetables with sauces or cheese Vegetables prepared with bouillon cubes or fatty meats such as ham hocks Sauerkraut, pickled vegetables Canned or dried soups (unless they are low-sodium or salt-free) French fries and onion rings |
| Fruits | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fresh and canned fruits | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dried fruits preserved with sodium-containing additives |
| Milk | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nonfat (skim) or 1% fat milk Nonfat or low-fat yogurt Small amounts of low-fat natural cheese or reduced-sodium cheese | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Buttermilk Processed cheese and cheese products (natural cheese should be eaten only in small amounts) |
| Meat and Other Protein Foods | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fresh meats and fish (check labels for frozen products) Tuna packed in water Dried beans and peas Eggs, especially egg whites | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cured or smoked meats (bacon, ham, sausage, Vienna sausage) Canned meats Lunch meats canned or smoked fish High-sodium frozen meals |
| Desserts and Snacks | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fruit Angel food cake Unsalted pretzels, popcorn, or nuts Low-fat pudding | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Baked goods made with baking soda Salted snacks such as nuts, chips, or pretzels |
| Fats and Oils | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tub or liquid margarine Unsaturated fat oils (canola, olive, corn, sunflower, safflower, peanut) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Salted butter or margarine |
| Condiments | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fresh or dried herbs Spices Vinegar Lemon or lime juice Pepper sauce Salt-free seasoning mixes Simple salad dressings (such as vinegar and oil) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Salt, sea salt, garlic salt Seasoning mixes containing salt Bouillon cubes Ketchup Barbecue sauce Worcestershire sauce Soy sauce Salsa Pickles, olives, relish |

Tips for Cooking and Eating Out

When you must eat away from home, these tips can help you do that in a healthy way:

- Plan ahead and look at menus online, or ask the server for heart-healthy or low-sodium menu options.
- Look for healthy symbols or words on menu items (fresh, light, skinny, etc.).
- Ask for food with no salt or MSG.
- Ask for food to be prepared with fat-free or 1% milk.
- Choose broiled, grilled, steamed, or poached foods instead of fried foods.
- Ask for dressing or sauce to be on the side.
- Use fat-free salad dressings or none at all.
- Be aware of appetizers, breads, and beverages before your meal arrives; these will add sodium and calories.
- Choose substitutions like a baked potato instead of French fries or breaded and fried vegetables. Look for colorful sides (fruits and vegetables) to add or substitute.
- Use margarine instead of butter, and ask for food to be prepared with healthier cooking oils (canola, corn, or sunflower oil).
- When eating ethnic foods, ask the server for options low in sodium and saturated fats.

Reference: heart.org/healthy-living/healthy-eating/eat-smart/nutrition-basics/dining-out-doesnt-mean-ditch-your-diet



Did You
Know?

Seasonings that are low in salt or salt-free include basic, dill, curry, chives, paprika, thyme, oregano, rosemary, red pepper, ginger, onion powder, garlic powder, and black pepper.

Exercise and Heart Failure

Exercise can improve the function of your heart, help reduce stress, and make you feel better. Walking, light weightlifting, and water workouts are types of activities that will improve muscle strength and energy levels. Walk and exercise at your own pace. You may need to pause and catch your breath.

Before you start an exercise program or increase your activity level, talk with your health care provider. Your doctor may perform some exercise testing before choosing the best exercise program for you.

The goal for exercise is to work towards 20-30 minutes of activity per day, 6 days a week. You do not have to be active for 30 minutes in a row to gain from exercise. For instance, you can try being active for 10-minute periods three times during the day.

Keep in mind that the harder the activity, the shorter the time you need to be active to benefit from it. If you do a less intense activity, such as working in the garden or light housework, you need to do it for a longer period of time.

You must watch for signs of being over-tired or over-stressed while exercising.

Signs of too much activity include:

- Being so short of breath that you cannot have a chat or say more than a few words while you are active
- Being so short of breath that it does not get better when you slow down or stop the activity
- Getting dizzy or feeling faint
- Chest pain, tightness or pressure
- Pain in your shoulders, arms, neck, or jaw
- Skipped heartbeats or a really fast or slow heart rate (pulse).



Health
Tip

If you have any of these symptoms while you are active, slow down. If the symptoms do not get better, stop the activity. Call 911 if your chest pain or symptoms do not go away.

How to Exercise

- Walking is the best activity. Start slowly, and as you get stronger, walk for longer periods of time.
- Try to make exercise a habit. Do it every morning or evening.
- Ask family and friends to exercise with you.
- Wear comfortable shoes and clothing.
- Don't exercise outside in extreme heat or cold. Find a local church, gym, shopping mall, or recreational center where you can walk inside.

Cardiac Rehabilitation

A cardiac rehabilitation program may be the best option for you. This is a structured exercise program for patients with heart problems. Your blood pressure, heart rate, and response to exercise are watched closely. At the end of the program, an exercise plan is outlined for you.



Did You
Know?

You should talk to your health care provider before starting any exercise program.

Medications and Heart Failure

Medications play an important role in managing your heart failure. It is very important that you know the medications you are taking, understand how those medications work, and take them as prescribed by your health care provider.

The most common types of heart failure medications are:

| Medication | Names of Medication | What the Medication Does |
|--|--|--|
| Angiotensin-Receptor Neprilysin Inhibitors (ARNIs) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sacubitril/valsartan (Entresto) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ARNIs are a new drug combination of a neprilysin inhibitor and an ARB • Helps your heart beat stronger |
| Angiotensin-Converting Enzyme (ACE) Inhibitors | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lisinopril (Prinivil, Zestril) • Ramipril (Altace) • Enalapril (Vasotec) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Helps to lower your blood pressure, make it easier for your heart to pump blood • Helps your heart failure even when you don't have high blood pressure |
| Angiotensin II Receptor Blockers (or Inhibitors) Also known as ARBs or Angiotensin-2 Receptor Antagonists | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Losartan (Cozaar) • Valsartan (Diovan) • Olmesartan (Benicar) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Helps to lower your blood pressure, make it easier for your heart to pump blood • Helps your heart failure even when you don't have high blood pressure |
| Beta Blockers (Also known as Beta-Adrenergic Blocking Agents) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Metoprolol succinate (Toprol XL) • Carvedilol (Coreg) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can make your heart stronger even when you don't have high blood pressure • Helps the heart to beat more slowly and lowers blood pressure |
| Aldosterone Antagonists | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spironolactone (Aldactone) • Eplerenone (Inspra) • Finerenone (Kerendia) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Helps to get rid of extra fluid and salt from the body • Prevents scarring of the heart muscle |
| Sodium-glucose cotransporter-2 (SGLT2) inhibitors | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dapagliflozin (Farixga) • Empagliflozin (Jardiance) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May help prevent heart failure hospitalizations as well as helping you maintain your blood sugar |
| Vasodilators | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hydralazine • Isosorbide dinitrate (Isordil) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Helps to lower your blood pressure by relaxing the blood vessel walls |
| Diuretics (Also known as water pills) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Furosemide (Lasix) • Bumetanide (Bumex) • Torsemide (Demadex) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Helps to get rid of extra fluid and salt from the body |



These tips can help you with taking your medication:

- Purchase pill boxes labeled with the days of the week. Fill the boxes at the start of the week with all of your daily drugs, so that you do not miss any.
- Always carry a list of your current drugs and their dosages with you in your wallet or purse. You may want to write the dose in pencil, so that you can quickly change them after doctor visits.
- Always take your drugs with you when you travel. You should also bring a few extra days' worth, in case you are gone longer than planned. When you travel, pack your drugs in your carry-on baggage – never in your checked luggage.
- Never skip pills or cut your pills to save money.
- Think about the time of day if you will be traveling when taking your diuretics (water pills)

Non-Prescription Medication & Supplements to Avoid

There are many medicines available without a prescription that people with heart failure should avoid. Some of these are listed in the chart below:

| Substance Type | Examples | Explanation |
|--|--|---|
| Non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advil • Motrin • Aleve | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May cause swelling, affect other heart failure drugs, and/or worsen symptoms. • Can harm kidney function. • If no known liver conditions, acetaminophen is the recommended treatment option and may be taken per bottle instructions. |
| Cold medications | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pseudoephedrine (Sudafed) • Phenylephrine • Dextromethorphan | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May worsen your heart failure, raise your blood pressure, or cause an irregular heart rhythm |
| Antacid medications | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alka-Seltzer | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contains a high amount of sodium, which may worsen your heart failure. • Tums is the recommended treatment option and may be taken per bottle instructions. |
| Herbs and supplements | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are hundreds of herbs and supplements on the market today. Many can cause problems with the drugs you are currently taking. • Talk to your doctor about these before you begin taking them. |



Did You Know?

It is important to call your health care provider if you have any questions about your medications.

Smoking and Heart Failure

Smoking and other forms of tobacco use harm almost every tissue and organ in your body.

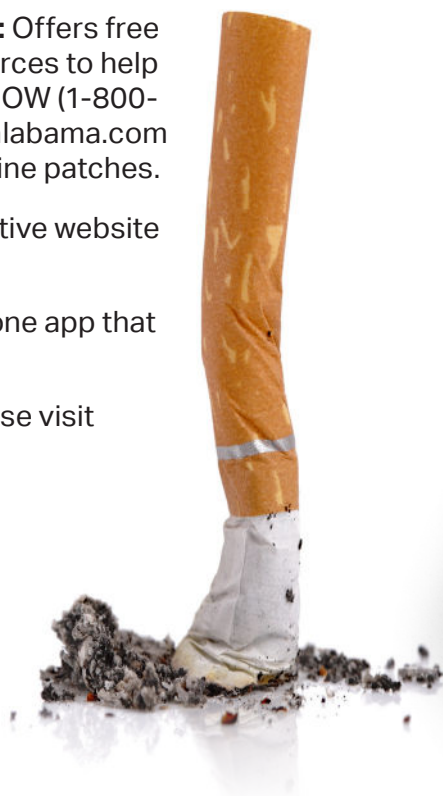
If you are a smoker, now is the time to stop. The benefits of quitting start immediately. Quitting tobacco and nicotine addiction is not easy, but others have done it and so can you.

Ask your health care provider about ways to quit. You may be eligible for nicotine replacement therapy to help you.

Secondhand smoke is also harmful, so stay away from places where you may breathe in secondhand smoke.

Quit Smoking

- **Alabama Tobacco Quitline:** Offers free telephone and online resources to help you quit. Call 1-800-QUIT NOW (1-800-784-8669) or visit quitnowalabama.com for counseling and/or nicotine patches.
- **Smokefree.gov:** An interactive website for helping smokers quit
- **Try quitSTART:** A smartphone app that can help you quit smoking
- **For more information:** Please visit uabmedicine.org/smoking.



Did You
Know?

Quitting smoking may be the
most important thing you do to
help your heart.



Alcohol and Heart Failure

Alcohol can weaken the heart muscle and can cause atrial fibrillation. Your health care provider may tell you to stop drinking alcohol altogether. Ask your health care provider if it is safe for you to drink alcohol.

Intimate Relations and Heart Failure

Heart failure may affect how much energy you have to do things you enjoy.

It is normal to worry about how much your heart can handle. The amount of energy it takes to climb two flights of stairs is the same amount of energy needed to have sexual relations with your partner. As with any activity, you should not have sex if you are feeling ill, are very short of breath, or if you are having chest pain.

Sexual activity will not make your heart failure worse. While sex may not be as easy as it once was, it is safe and can still be a pleasing experience for you and your partner.

People with heart failure may have problems with sex, such as decreased sex drive, impotence, or failure to climax. Discuss any questions or concerns you may have about sex with your doctor or nurse.

These tips can help you enjoy your sex life more:

- Pick a time for sex when you feel rested and calm.
- Avoid sex after a large meal.
- Use foreplay to help your heart get used to the increased activity.
- Avoid positions in which you must support your weight with your arms. You may need to try out less taxing positions for sex, such as lying on the bottom or with you and your partner lying side by side.
- If intercourse is too hard for you, try to find other ways to be close with your partner.



Dealing With Stress

Heart failure symptoms can get worse with increased stress. Anxiety, anger, and excitement can cause your heart to work harder.

Chronic stress disrupts nearly all systems in your body. It can raise blood pressure, suppress the immune system, and increase the risk of heart attack, stroke, and heart failure.

Stress can lead to unhealthy coping habits, which over time may result in health issues. For example, people under stress may overeat, drink excessively, or smoke. These harmful behaviors can raise the risk of heart disease. The important thing is to handle your stress in a healthy way.

Try to surround yourself with positive, supportive, and encouraging people in your life. Seek a support group to help you talk about how you are feeling. Learn to recognize stressful situations.

These tips can help you cope with stress:

- Call a good friend on the phone.
- Start a quiet hobby.
- Do things you enjoy, like reading a book or spending time with friends and family.
- Go for a walk to clear your mind.
- Talk to your pastor, rabbi, or priest.
- Relax by doing breathing exercises or meditation.
- Avoid stressful situations, such as rush-hour traffic or being late.



Health
Tip

Managing your stress is one way to help manage your heart failure.



Dealing With Depression

Depression can be very common when you have heart disease or heart failure. Depression can be treated with medications, therapy, and other treatments. Talk to your medical provider if you think you may be depressed.

Things that can lead to depression include multiple losses in your life, being diagnosed with a medical condition, lack of sleep, lack of exercise, substance abuse, and eating an unhealthy diet.

According to the National Institute of Mental Health, you have major depression if you experience five or more of the following signs and symptoms for at least a two-week period:

- ☐ Persistent sadness, pessimism
- ☐ Feelings of guilt, worthlessness, helplessness, or hopelessness
- ☐ Loss of interest or pleasure in usual activities, including sex
- ☐ Difficulty concentrating and complaints of poor memory
- ☐ Worsening of co-existing chronic disease, such as rheumatoid arthritis, heart failure, or diabetes
- ☐ Insomnia or oversleeping
- ☐ Weight gain or loss
- ☐ Fatigue, lack of energy
- ☐ Anxiety, agitation, irritability
- ☐ Thoughts of suicide or death
- ☐ Slow speech, slow movements
- ☐ Headache, stomach ache, and digestive problems

IF YOU HAVE THOUGHTS OF SUICIDE OR HURTING YOURSELF OR OTHERS, SEEK IMMEDIATE PROFESSIONAL HELP.

Lifestyle Changes At A Glance



Did You Know?

Coming up with a collaborative treatment plan with your health care provider will help you to adhere to your daily regimen. Discuss with your health care provider if you are having difficulty following any part of the plan.

Following your treatment plan can help you manage your heart failure. You can make changes in your daily life to help you stay healthy and keep your heart failure symptoms from getting worse.

Watch Your Weight

Weight gain can be a sign that your body is keeping too much fluid and that your heart failure is getting worse. Checking your weight is very important in managing your heart failure.

Purchase a bathroom scale if you don't have one. Make sure you can see the numbers on the scale. Dial scales may be harder to read but are more accurate than digital scales. Place your scale in a handy location, on a flat surface without carpet.

Use a calendar, notebook paper, or log to track your weight, and keep it by your scale. Each morning, step on the scale after you empty your bladder. Weigh before eating or drinking. Always weigh in the same clothing or no clothing. Record your weight every day.

Ask your health care provider when you should report weight gain and what you should do about it. If you delay in calling your doctor, you may need a hospital stay.

Maintain A Healthy Weight With Diet And Exercise

Eating a healthy, balanced diet can help control your heart failure. Maintaining a healthy weight by eating fewer calories if you are overweight and more calories if you are underweight is important.

Exercise may help you maintain a healthy weight. Exercise is also part of helping your heart become stronger. Increase your exercise to low- or moderate-intensity.

Watch your fluid intake, and stick to your fluid restriction if it is ordered for you.



Resources:



Find help and a support network for your health care journey

heart.org/health-topics/consumer-healthcare



Learn more about heart failure

heart.org/HF



An interactive workbook to help manage heart failure symptoms

heart.org/health-topics/heart-failure/living-with-heart-failure-and-managing-advanced-hf/living-with-hf-guide



Tools and resources for managing heart failure

heart.org/health-topics/heart-failure/heart-failure-tools-resources



Understanding health and nutrient claims on food packaging

heart.org/healthy-living/healthy-eating/eat-smart/nutrition-basics/food-packaging-claims

Source: American Heart Association

Blood Pressure and Weight Logs

[illegible]

****Notify your doctor if your weight increases by 3 pounds in 24-48 hours or 5 pounds in 1 week.****

NOTES

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