



DOYLESTOWN HEALTH'S

*Guide to Living Well with **Heart Failure***

A TOOLKIT FOR PATIENTS, FAMILIES AND CAREGIVERS



Important Contacts

Primary Contact

Name: _____

Phone Number: _____

Primary Physician

Name: _____

Phone Number: _____

Cardiologist

Name: _____

Phone Number: _____

Pulmonologist

Name: _____

Phone Number: _____

Nephrologist

Name: _____

Phone Number: _____

Dialysis Center: _____

Other Doctors

Name: _____

Phone Number: _____

Name: _____

Phone Number: _____

Name: _____

Phone Number: _____

Local Hospital

Name: _____

Phone Number: _____

Pharmacy

Name: _____

Phone Number: _____

Friends, Family Members, and Other Caregivers

Name: _____

Phone Number: _____

Name: _____

Phone Number: _____

Visiting Nurse Agency

Name: _____

Phone Number: _____

Heart Failure Coordinator Doylestown Hospital

Phone Number: 215.345.2917

Insurance Information

Policy Holder's Name: _____

Policy Number: _____

Group Number: _____

You Can Live Well with Heart Failure!

You have been given this book because you are here in the hospital with heart failure or you may have had heart failure in the past. While this may sound overwhelming, with the right treatment, heart failure can be controlled. With the right medicine, changes to your diet, and other forms of treatment, you can learn to manage your condition and improve your quality of life. This book will help you understand your heart failure and treatment plan. It will teach you to take care of yourself so you feel your best and stay out of the hospital. It will not replace visits with your health care team, but it will allow you to take better care of yourself between visits.

What is Heart Failure?

Heart Failure occurs when the heart is weak or stiff and has trouble pumping blood and oxygen to the rest of the body. This may lead to a backup of fluid into the lungs, legs, arms and other parts of the body. These problems can lead to the symptoms you feel.



PLACE A CHECKMARK next to any **symptoms** you have had in the past.

PLACE A CHECKMARK next to any of the **causes of heart failure** that might describe your condition.

What are the Symptoms of Heart Failure? What Causes it?

You may have many symptoms, or only a few.

Here are the most common symptoms:

- ☐ Shortness of breath, wheezing, or coughing either at rest or with activity
- ☐ Swelling of the legs, ankles and feet, abdomen and arms
- ☐ Abdominal bloating or decreased appetite
- ☐ Rapid weight gain
- ☐ Fatigue
- ☐ Problems breathing when you are lying flat, or the need to sleep in a recliner or propped up on pillows
- ☐ Waking up at night coughing or short of breath

- ☐ Coronary artery disease (blockage of arteries) and prior heart attacks
- ☐ High blood pressure
- ☐ Heart valve disease
- ☐ Heart rhythm disorders including atrial fibrillation
- ☐ Diabetes
- ☐ Obesity
- ☐ Side effects of toxic drugs such as chemotherapy
- ☐ Smoking, Alcohol or Illicit drug use
- ☐ Inherited heart problem
- ☐ Viruses
- ☐ Sometimes, the cause is unknown

My Diet, Fluid and Exercise Plan

My Sodium Goal

- No more than 2,000 mg of sodium per day.
- Aim for 500 mg or less of sodium per meal (most people eat 3 meals and one snack per day).
- Buy foods that are low in sodium and have less than 140mg sodium per serving on the nutrition label.

My Fluid Goal

My doctor may recommend a fluid restriction of about **48 ounces of fluid per day** (6 cups of fluid per day. 1 cup= 8 ounces). Talk with my doctor to decide what fluid amount is best for me.

Daily Weights

I should weigh myself first thing every morning after urinating, but before eating or drinking. I should record my weights, and remember that it is best to weigh myself without clothes or with the same amount each time. I will place my scale on a flat surface with no carpet. **I need to call my doctor for a weight gain of 2-3 pounds in 24 hours or 5 pounds in one week.** Use weight log in resource packet and/or make copies for use at home.

Knowing My Heart Failure Zone

I should follow my heart failure zone plan (in resource packet) every day to recognize any changes in symptoms and know when to call the doctor or go to the emergency room.

My Exercise Goal

Walking and other forms of light to moderate exercise can be good for my heart and overall health. I should talk with my doctor and set an exercise plan.

Follow Up With My Health Care Providers

My next follow up appointments are:

It is up to you and your loved ones to pay attention to how you feel every single day.

Being aware of your baselines is an important way to manage your heart condition. If a problem occurs, you can get help before it gets worse. As long as your symptoms stay about the same every day, your heart failure is stable. But if symptoms get worse, *it is time to take action!*



MY BASELINES (when I am feeling well)

I normally weigh: _____

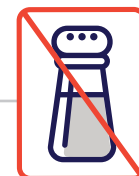
My belt buckle usually fits into the _____ hole.

I can walk from _____ to _____ before getting short of breath (e.g. I can walk from my chair to the bathroom before getting short of breath).

I can climb _____ stairs before getting short of breath.

Other baselines: _____

Following a Low-Sodium/Salt Diet



Sodium (salt) attracts water and causes the body to retain fluid. This causes swelling and forces your heart to work harder. It is important to follow a low-salt diet every day. Even one high salt meal can make you retain fluid and increase the risk of being hospitalized.

It is recommended that you eat no more than 2,000mg of sodium in a day. This is equal to about 500mg of sodium per meal.

Removing the salt shaker is the first step. Be aware that salt is hidden in many of our foods. In fact 77% of our daily sodium intake comes from what is already IN food.

Just 1 teaspoon of salt is equal to your entire daily limit!

 **1 TSP = 2,000 MG OF SODIUM**

Tips to Lower Your Sodium Intake at Home Tips for Eating at Restaurants

- Read nutrition labels. Buy foods that have less than 140mg of sodium per serving.
- Avoid processed foods such as processed cheeses and meats.
- Remove the salt shaker from the table and the stove. Replace with other seasonings and spices.
- Don't salt cooking water or add salt to your cooking.
- Use fresh or plain frozen vegetables.
- If you use high-sodium condiments and salad dressings, dip your fork in them instead of pouring them on food.
- Use spice blends like Mrs. Dash® or create your own spice blend (see recipe in resource packet).
- Choose baked, broiled, grilled, poached, roasted or steamed foods.
- Limit breading, butter or sauces. Or ask for them on the side.
- Skip the bread basket.
- Eat half of your meal. Save leftovers for the next day.
- Use fresh lemon or pepper to flavor vegetables, salads or baked potatoes.
- Go easy on salad dressing. Have it on the side. Use olive oil and vinegar instead which is sodium free.
- Ask for no salt added.
- Stay away from fast food restaurants.



It is recommended that I have **no more than:** _____ **mg of sodium**
in a day, which is about _____ **mg of sodium per meal.**

Tips for Grocery Shopping

- **SHOP THE PERIMETER.** Fresh produce, fresh meats, chicken and fish, low-fat dairy products, and plain frozen vegetables and fruits are often lower in sodium. They are found in the outside aisles of the store. The center aisles at the grocery store often contain foods higher in sodium.
- If you buy canned vegetables, buy the “No salt added” types.
- Try the organic aisle for different low-sodium options on breads, soups, and some sauces.
- Use our Low-Sodium Grocery List (in resource packet) as a guide to help you shop.
- **Be aware of food label traps!** Just because something says it is “Heart Healthy” or “Reduced Sodium” does not always mean it is low-sodium. Reading the nutrition label facts is the only real way to find out how much sodium the food contains.

How to Read a Nutritional Label

- 1) Look at the **serving size**
- 2) Look at the **sodium per serving**
- 3) Choose foods with **less than 140 mg sodium per serving**

***This food has 40mg sodium in 1/2 cup. This food is a good choice!**

Nutrition Facts	
Serving Size 1/2 cup (about 82g)	
Servings Per Container: 8	
Amount Per Serving	
Calories 200	Calories from Fat 130
% Daily Value*	
Total Fat 14g	22%
Saturated Fat 0g	0%
Trans Fat 0g	
Cholesterol 55mg	18%
Sodium 40mg	2%
Total Carbohydrate 17g	6%
Dietary Fiber 1g	4%
Sugars 14g	
Protein 3g	
Vitamin A 10%	Vitamin C 0%
Calcium 10%	Iron 6%
*Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet. Your daily values may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs.	

Understanding Food Packaging

Salt/Sodium Free*	Less than 5mg sodium per serving
Very Low Sodium*	35 mg or less per serving
Low Sodium*	140 mg or less per serving
No Salt Added or Unsalted*	No salt added during food processing, but may still contain natural sodium
Light in Sodium or Lightly Salted	Sodium is reduced by at least 50% per serving
Reduced Sodium	At least 25% less sodium than the original product

Just because something is reduced sodium does not mean that it is always a low-sodium food. For example, reduced sodium soy sauce often still has >600 mg of sodium per 2 Tablespoon serving.

What Foods Can I Choose Instead?

People who have heart failure often feel that their diets are very limited due to their sodium restriction. But this isn't true. There is so much that you CAN eat and enjoy! Here is a list of a few switches you can make to allow yourself the same types of foods you crave without all the added salt!



CIRCLE SOME THINGS you might want to try.

BREAKFAST	If You Often Eat	Try Instead
	Packaged breakfast pastries or frozen waffles and pancakes	Toasted raisin bread
	Salted butter	Unsalted butter or jam
	Omelet with sausage, bacon and cheese	Scrambled eggs with sauteed vegetables and swiss cheese
	Flavored oatmeal in packets	Plain cooked cereal with fresh fruit or cinnamon
	Cold cereal with milk	Shredded Wheat with skim milk
	Frozen hash browns	Fresh hash browns or a low sodium brand
LUNCH	Cottage Cheese	Low-Sodium Cottage Cheese and fruit
	If You Often Eat	Try Instead
	Pickles	Cucumber slices dipped in vinegar
	Peanut butter	Unsalted peanut butter or almond butter
	Lunch meat	Baked chicken or turkey sliced, or tuna from a can in water
	Processed cheese (American); or a grilled cheese sandwich	Sliced swiss cheese or fresh mozzarella in smaller amounts on low-sodium bread
	Soup from a can or package	Plain noodles with your own seasoning or homemade soup. Or a canned soup that is truly low in sodium (less than 140mg per serving)
	Potato salad or coleslaw	Garden salad with olive oil and vinegar
	Saltine crackers	Low-sodium crackers
	Chips or french fries	Unsalted pretzels, nuts or chips

If You Often Eat	Try Instead
Table salt (for cooking)	Lemon, garlic, pepper, spices, low-sodium spice mixes
Soy sauce (for cooking)	Sesame or peanut oil
Bottled salad dressing	Olive oil, vinegar and herbs
Frozen or boxed potatoes	Boiled or baked potatoes with unsalted butter or sour cream
Boxed rice mix with seasoning packet	White or brown rice with your own seasoning
Canned vegetables or beans	Frozen, fresh or No Salt Added canned vegetables or beans
Ham	Roast Pork
Smoked turkey	Roast turkey or chicken
Canned or bottled spaghetti sauce	Homemade sauce from low-sodium canned tomatoes, or no-salt added brand of sauce with pasta
Pizza	Make your own pizza with sauce as above and fresh mozzarella with basil
Sausage, hot dogs	Hamburger patty, ground turkey or ground chicken
Crabmeat, shrimp, oysters, and other shellfish	Baked, broiled, steamed or grilled fish (tilapia, salmon, catfish, etc) or shellfish in very small portions. Season with lemon juice and olive oil instead of butter and sauces or breading.



WRITE A LIST of 3 different seasonings that are good to use on your food instead of using salt:

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____



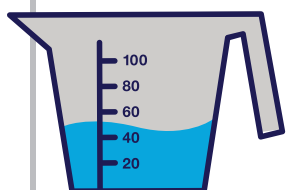
CIRCLE ALL OF THE ITEMS below that are high in sodium:

Gatorade	Roasted Chicken	Canned Soups	Bacon
Macaroni & Cheese	Soy Sauce	Grilled Salmon	Lunch Meats
Salad Dressings	Hot Dogs	Fresh Fruit	Pickles

If You Are Told to Limit Fluid

People with decreased heart function tend to retain fluid in their body. Normally, extra fluid is filtered out of the body by the kidneys and is made into urine. This does not happen as well when the heart is not working properly. Your doctor may tell you to limit your fluid intake to 48 ounces per day. Ask your health care provider if you should be on a fluid restriction, and if so, how much per day.

A fluid is anything that is liquid at room temperature. This includes:



- Ice (1 cup of ice cubes = $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of water)
- Water
- Juice
- Soda
- Milk
- Coffee/Tea
- Soup
- Gravy
- Jello/Pudding
- Ice Cream/Sherbert
- Popsicles
- Watermelon (98% water)

Tips for Controlling Fluid Intake

- Drink ONLY when thirsty
- Space your liquids out over the entire day
- Suck on an ice cube
- Use small cups and glasses
- Use a mouth rinse like Biotene™ to decrease symptoms of dry mouth
- If possible take medicines with mealtime liquids
- Chew on sugar free gum or suck on sugar free candy
- Suck on lemon drops or lemon wedges
- Keep frozen grapes in freezer and suck on them instead of drinking

Tips for Measuring Fluid Intake

- Fill a container with the same amount of water as your daily fluid goal. Each time you have any kind of fluid, pour out the same amount of water from the container. This will help you know when you've reached your daily limit.
- Use a measuring cup to stay within daily fluid goals.
- Measure the size of your drinking cup and coffee cup and count how many times you fill them each day.



MY FLUID GOAL is no more than _____ ounces of fluid per day.



What about Alcohol?

You may be told to reduce the amount of alcohol you drink, even if you don't need to limit other fluids. Too much alcohol damages the heart muscle. If your heart failure was caused by alcohol, you will likely be told to drink none at all. In other cases, alcohol may be okay in small amounts. Talk to your doctor about what is right for you.

What about Smoking?

If you smoke, quitting is one of the most important things you can do to improve your health. Quitting reduces your chances of heart attack, cancer, stroke and other severe lung diseases. Quitting smoking is not easy, but many people have done it before. You can too!

Make a “Quit Plan.” This takes patience. Think about your triggers and how you will cope with these. Think about whom you will ask for support, or join a support group. Talk to your health care provider about products to help you quit smoking.

What is Nicotine Addiction?

Nicotine is an addictive drug. It causes changes in the brain that make people want to use it more. The addictive drugs cause unpleasant withdrawal symptoms.

What does Nicotine do to the body?

- Increases blood pressure
- Increases heart rate
- Increases the flow of blood from the heart
- Causes arteries to narrow
- Learn about smoking cessation support in your resource packet.

Carbon Monoxide is a by-product of smoke. What does it do?

- Reduces the amount of oxygen the blood can carry
- Damages the inner walls of the arteries
- Encourages the fatty buildup in the arteries
- Causes the blood vessels to narrow and harden
- Causes changes in the clotting of the blood, making heart attack more likely

Find your motivation! It is different for everyone.

- Your life will be healthier and you may live longer.
- You can benefit from quitting, even if you have smoked for many years.
- Your risk of heart attacks, cancer and stroke will decrease.
- Quitting smoking will improve the air quality of those around you and help keep them healthy.
- You will have extra money to spend on items other than cigarettes.

Living With a Chronic Condition

Having a heart condition such as heart failure may create new concerns and challenges in your life. Use this section to help you: keep up with the activities that matter to you, take care of your emotional health, and prepare for the future.

Can I still socialize with family and friends?

Of course! Being with family and friends at parties often involves eating. Plan ahead and bring your own low sodium dish if it is a potluck. Enjoy the fresh fruit and vegetable platters and have a small bite of one of the more risky side dishes. Remember, you are with people who love you and will be okay if you politely say “That looks great, but my doctor says I can’t eat salt.”

Can I still travel?

Yes! You just have to plan ahead. Make sure you travel with enough medicine. Pack these in your carry-on. Talk to your health care provider and plan what you should do if you notice any swelling or weight gain while you are away. Make sure it is okay with your doctor if you fly in an airplane. The same daily guidelines apply when you are away on vacation:

- Continue to weigh yourself daily if you are able to. Pack a portable scale! If not, pay very close attention to any changes in symptoms. Do not wait until the end of your vacation to notify a doctor if you notice any symptoms.
- Continue to take your medicines at the same time as usual.
- Stick to your low-sodium diet on vacation.

Can I still remain physically active?

Yes! You may have less energy sometimes. Most people with heart failure have days that are better than others. Physical activity every day is good for your heart. Here are some tips:

- Start slowly and gradually build up activity every day.
- Aerobic activity is best (walking or swimming).
- Weight training is helpful. Start with light intensity. Gradually build to moderate intensity.
- Give yourself plenty of rest in between and stop exercising if tired.
- Many people benefit from a Cardiac Rehabilitation program.
- If exercising makes you too tired to perform any other tasks for the rest of the day, decrease the intensity and duration of your workout. It is most effective to gradually build up intensity and duration, adding about 2-3 minutes of exercise to your workout every week up to a maximum of 20-30 minutes.
- *For further information on an exercise program through Cardiac Rehabilitation at Doylestown Hospital, please call 215.345.2390.*



How can I conserve my energy?

- Stop and rest when you feel tired. Do not wait until fatigued.
- Plan out each day. Try to accomplish one or two things with rest in between.
- Use a rolling cart for lifting or pushing heavy things like cleaning supplies and laundry.
- Try to sit down as often as you can while cleaning, folding laundry or other household tasks.
- To lower your risk of feeling faint, avoid hot or cold showers. Leave a window or door open while showering to avoid humidity.
- Get 6-8 hours of sleep per night. Take rest time during the day.

How can I manage my emotional health?

It's normal to feel sad or down at times. Coping with a chronic health problem is hard. Try to focus on one day at a time. Don't be afraid to ask for help.

Strategies for Staying in Control:

- Find a hobby
- Try yoga or meditation
- Stay connected with friends and family
- Listen to music or read a book
- Join a support group (information about Doylestown support group in resource packet)
- Talk to your health care provider if you feel down most days or are having problems with appetite or sleep, as these are signs of depression. Treatment for depression can help you feel better and may help your overall health improve as well.

Can I stay intimate with my partner?

In most cases, heart failure should not interfere with sexual activity. If you can climb two flights of stairs, you should be able to engage in sexual activity. It is normal for people with heart failure to become less interested in sexual activity or have less sexual pleasure. This can be due to:

- Decreased blood supply to the body
- Side effects from some medicines
- Fears or concerns about the heart during sex

Tips to help you stay intimate:

- Wait until you are well rested
- Use positions that require less energy, like side lying or on your back
- If you feel discomfort, stop and rest
- Talk to your health care provider if you have any concerns about your sexual activity. ***It is not safe to stop or start taking medicines due to sexual concerns. Talk with your doctor first.***

Discussions about Planning Ahead

Depending on how far along your illness has progressed, you may be ready to ask your doctor about ways to help with symptom management and quality of life. This may include visiting nurses, outpatient palliative care services or hospice. Please talk with your doctor or nurse if you feel you are ready to learn more about these options as you begin to look ahead.

There is a program at the hospital to help patients plan for their future health care wishes and communicate these wishes to their medical providers and loved ones. Ask us about preparing an Advance Directive.

Most Commonly Used Heart Failure Medicines

Types of Medicine	What They Do	Possible Side Effects	Important to Know
ACE Inhibitor, ARB, ARNI Your medicine: _____ <i>*Can extend life in patients with heart failure.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> lowers blood pressure reduces strain on the heart makes it easier for the heart to pump improves blood flow 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> low blood pressure dizziness dry cough change in kidney function too much potassium in the body 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> dose starts low and increases slowly over time need to have blood tests to check potassium levels and kidney function get medical help right away if mouth, lips, or tongue become swollen
Beta Blocker Your medicine: _____ <i>*In combination with ACE/ARB/ARNi can extend life even further.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> lowers blood pressure slows heart rate may strengthen heart's pumping action over time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> low blood pressure dizziness low heart rate depression tiredness sexual dysfunction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> dose will increase over time do not stop this medicine suddenly call your health care provider if you have side effects
Diuretic Your medicine: _____ <i>*Also called "water pills."</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> helps rid the body of excess water reduces swelling may improve breathing reduces work for the heart 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> frequent urination potassium/magnesium/sodium loss kidney problems low blood pressure high blood sugar dizziness gout impotence dehydration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> dose changes by how much fluid is retained a potassium supplement may be needed (if told by your health care provider)
Aldosterone Antagonist Your medicine: _____ <i>*Given for advanced heart failure.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> alters hormones that damage the heart reduces strain on the heart 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> changes kidney function low blood pressure breast swelling, tenderness (in both men and women) too much potassium in the body 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> need to have blood tests to check potassium levels if potassium levels are high, you may need to avoid or limit high-potassium foods
Digoxin	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> slows heart rate strengthens heart's pumping action 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> slow heart rate if drug amount too high yellow tinted vision loss of appetite stomach pain nausea/vomiting/diarrhea heart rhythm problems tiredness or weakness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> blood levels of the drug may need to be checked call your health care provider if you have side effects
Hydralazine and Nitrate Your medicine: _____ <i>*Relieves chest pain.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> lowers blood pressure reduces work for the heart dilates blood vessels 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> low blood pressure dizziness fast heart rate headache leg swelling nausea and vomiting flushed skin 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> call your health care provider if you have side effects
Anticoagulants Your medicine: _____	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> thins blood lowers the risk of forming clots lowers your risk of stroke 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> risk for bruising risk of bleeding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> will need to have frequent blood testing some anticoagulants do not require frequent testing notify your health care provider immediately if you have excessive bruising, bleeding, or have a fall

*** It is important to speak with your doctor before using non-steroidal anti-inflammatories (NSAIDs) such as ibuprofen, naproxen, or by trade names Advil, Motrin, and Aleve. NSAIDs may cause unwanted side effects such as fluid retention. ***



Common Tests for Heart Failure

- **Laboratory blood work:** To check drug levels, chemistry, blood counts, etc.
- **Prothrombin Time (INR):** To check blood thinning effects from warfarin (Coumadin).
- **Chest X-ray:** To check for fluid in the lungs.
- **Echocardiogram:** To see how well the heart pumps and examine heart valves. Best way to measure your Ejection Fraction (the volume of blood ejected from the heart with each heart beat: normal is 60%).
- **Exercise Stress Testing:** To check for coronary artery blockages.
- **Cardiac Catheterization:** To check for coronary artery blockages, heart pressures and blood flow to vital organs.
- **Cardiopulmonary Stress Testing (VO2):** To assess exercise tolerance and effectiveness of medicines.

Important Health Information



Allergies: _____

Medical Conditions: _____

Surgeries: _____

Last Echocardiogram: _____

My Ejection Fraction: (percentage of blood that is pumped out with each heart beat;
normal is 60%) _____

Creatinine: (blood test for kidney function) _____

Resources

Heart Failure Support Group

The Heart Failure Support Group meets on the second Thursday of April and October. For more information, visit DoylestownHealth.org/SupportGroups or call **215.345.2328**.

Doylestown Health's Cardiac Rehabilitation Program

Call **215.345.2390** and talk to your doctor.

Advance Directives/Health Care Planning

Looking Ahead: LookingAheadACP.org | **267.544.95800**

Heart Failure Information:

Heart Failure Society of America: HFSA.org

American Heart Association: AmericanHeart.org

American Association of Heart Failure Nurses: AAHFN.org

CardioSmart: CardioSmart.org

For access to a free interactive Heart Failure Workbook and Low Sodium Cookbooks, please visit
DoylestownHealth.org/HeartFailure



Doylestown Hospital | Doylestown Health Physicians | Pine Run Health Center | Doylestown Home Health & Hospice

595 West State Street | Doylestown, PA 18901 | 215.345.2200 | DoylestownHealth.org