



Self-Care for Heart Failure: Your Daily Log

Hear failure is a serious condition. However, there are many ways to manage your life with heart failure. To help stay healthy, try following these simple self-care tips:

- Weigh yourself every day at the same time. Record your weight on a daily log. (See the other side of this page.)
- Eat less sodium (salt) each day. Check food labels for salt content. Aim for < 1500 mg total per day, or no more than 500 mg total per meal.
- Take all the medications that your heart failure care team prescribes for you, as directed.
- Monitor your heart failure symptoms each day.
- Check and record your blood pressure and pulse rate each day.
- Balance physical activity with rest.
- Stop smoking and avoid alcohol.

What signs and symptoms should I watch for?

Call 911 or go to the hospital nearest to you if you have these **emergency symptoms** of heart failure:*

- Severe shortness of breath
- Coughing up pink, frothy sputum

- Chest discomfort, pain, or pressure not relieved by rest or by taking nitroglycerin, if it is already prescribed for you.

Call your doctor or other health care professional right away if the following symptoms **get worse or if they are new for you**:

- Sudden weight gain of 2 or more pounds in 1 day or 5 or more pounds gained in 5 days.
- Change in blood pressure, especially if the systolic pressure (top number) is less than 90.
- New or increasing irregularities in your heart rate (greater than 110 beats per minute).
- Shortness of breath (at rest or with activity).
- Increased swelling of your feet, legs, or abdominal area.
- Difficulty breathing when you lie down flat. You might find you need more pillows or a recliner to sleep at night.
- Waking up from sleep because you are panting or breathing rapidly.
- New or worsening dizziness and/or lightheadedness, fainting, or loss of consciousness.
- A cough that does not go away.
- Any problems with your medications.

What is the correct way to weigh myself?

1. Weigh yourself every morning after you have emptied your bladder but before you have eaten breakfast.
2. Either weigh yourself with the same amount of clothing on or without clothing.
3. Use the same scale each time you weigh yourself. Make sure it is on a hard surface.
4. Set the scale to zero before weighing yourself.
5. Record your weight in pounds (lbs.) on the log on the other side of this page.

On the back of this tip sheet, you will find a self-care log. Use this log to record health information each day, such as how much you weigh each morning and what your blood pressure, heart rate, and activity levels are during the day. You can make copies to bring with you to your appointments with your heart failure care team.

* If you have an emergency medical condition, call 911 or go to the nearest hospital. An emergency medical condition is (1) a medical or psychiatric condition that manifests itself by acute symptoms of sufficient severity (including severe pain) such that you could reasonably expect the absence of immediate medical attention to result in serious jeopardy to your health or serious impairment or dysfunction of your bodily functions or organs; or, (2) when you are in active labor and there isn't enough time for safe transfer to a Plan hospital before delivery, or if transfer poses a threat to you or your unborn child's health and safety.

This information is not intended to diagnose health problems or to take the place of medical advice or care you receive from your physician or other health care professional. If you have persistent health problems, or if you have additional questions, please consult with your doctor.

