

A Guide for People Living with Heart Failure

What is Heart Failure?

The heart is unable to pump enough blood to meet the body's needs. Blood that should be pumped out of the heart can back up into the lungs and other parts of the body.

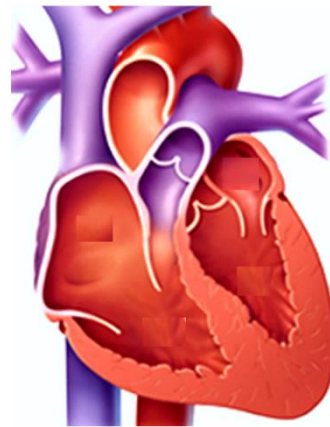
What should I look for?

- Shortness of breath
- Swollen ankles
- Swollen belly
- Frequent, dry hacking cough
- Loss of appetite
- Very tired with hardly any effort

Should I check my weight?

Yes. A sudden weight gain is a sign of holding salt and water.

- Weigh yourself – first thing in the morning after you urinate.
- 3 lb or more weight gain in 24 hours – Call us 24 hours a day.
- 3-5 lbs weight gain in one week – Call us 24 hours a day.



What is the treatment?

- Low sodium, low fat diet
- Limiting fluids
- Daily weights
- Medications
- Exercise (as prescribed)

Should I limit my fluid intake?

Ask your doctor for guidelines as to how many glasses of fluid you are allowed each day.

Many recommend no more than 8 cups each day.

Examples of fluids – water, juice, yogurt, ice cubes, ice cream, coffee, milk, and gelatin.

Hints to Lower Sodium in Your Diet

- Do not cook with salt. 1 tsp. of salt equals 2,000 mg of sodium.
- Read food labels for sodium content.
- Avoid “fast” foods.
- Eat fresh or frozen vegetables.
- Buy water packed tuna and rinse in cold water.
- Bake, broil or steam foods without salt.
- Do not buy convenience foods such as lunch meats, hot dogs, frozen or canned foods.

Special points to remember:

Call us 24 hours a day at 484-580-1601



Main Line Health®
HomeCare & Hospice