

# Heart Failure

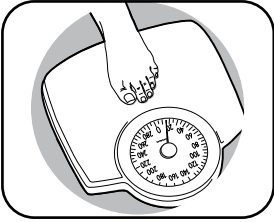


Allina Health



## When To Call Your Health Care Provider

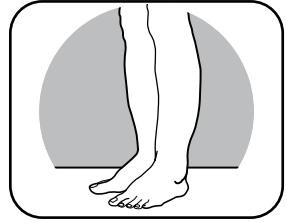
Call your health care provider if you have any of these:



- gain 3 pounds in 1 day or 5 pounds in 1 week



- more short of breath than usual



- more swelling of your feet, ankles, legs or stomach than usual



- feeling more tired than usual or being unable to do your everyday activities

- breathing becomes harder when you lie down (You need to start sleeping in a chair.)
- if you are unable to take your medicine as directed



## **When to Call 911 or Go to a Hospital Emergency Department**

Call 911 or go to a hospital emergency department if you are:

- struggling to breathe
- having chest pain
- confused or unable to think clearly.

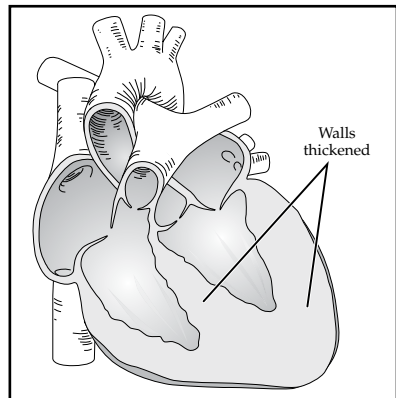
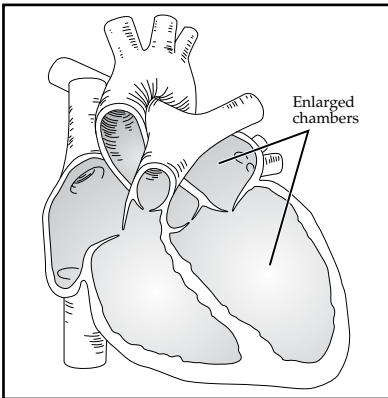
## Heart Failure

Heart failure doesn't mean your heart has stopped working or is about to stop working. It also doesn't mean you have had a heart attack.

Heart failure means your heart isn't pumping blood as well as it should. Because your heart isn't able to pump the normal amount of blood out of your ventricles, the blood vessels leading into your heart can become congested or "backed up" with blood.

Your heart may be damaged and pump with less force. To try to keep the same amount of blood moving through your body, the chambers stretch to hold more blood. This is known as heart enlargement. Your heart muscle begins to weaken as it tries to pump this increased blood.

Parts of your body can hold extra fluid that isn't being moved very well by your heart. Your body becomes congested with fluid. This is why heart failure is sometimes called "congestive heart failure."



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**Heart failure can be caused by enlarged chambers (left) or thickened walls (right).**

## Types of Heart Failure

There are two types of heart failure: left-sided and right-sided. The medicine your doctor prescribes will be specific for your type of heart failure.

### Left-sided

- When the left ventricle isn't as strong as it should be, it works harder to pump the same amount of blood.
- There are two types of left-sided heart failure:
  - The left ventricle loses its ability to squeeze (contract) normally. The heart doesn't have enough force to pump blood through the body.
  - The left ventricle can't "relax" because the heart muscle is stiff. The heart can't fill up with blood and there is less blood to pump through the body.
- You feel short of breath if fluid backs up in your lungs.

### Right-sided

- When the right ventricle doesn't pump blood to the lungs like it should, less oxygen is in the blood. As a result, the blood backs up into the veins.
- You have swelling in your feet, legs and abdomen if the fluid backs up.

## Causes of Heart Failure

### ■ Coronary artery disease

When plaque (fatty deposits) builds up on the inside of your heart's arteries, it reduces the amount of blood and oxygen your heart receives. As a result, your heart muscle may become damaged. Your heart becomes weak and less blood gets pumped to the rest of your body.

## ■ Heart attack

When an artery to the heart becomes completely blocked, the part of the heart muscle that receives blood from that artery dies. This is called a heart attack.

It can feel like a crushing type of pain and usually lasts longer than angina (general chest pain).

A heart attack leaves your heart permanently damaged or scarred. This means the undamaged part of your heart has to work harder.

## ■ High blood pressure (hypertention)

When the amount of pressure inside your arteries is high, your heart has to pump with more force to push the blood through the blood vessels. If high blood pressure is not treated, your heart muscle becomes larger and its pumping ability weakens.

High blood pressure usually has no signs. Your blood pressure is checked with two numbers. The top (systolic) shows the pressure in your arteries when your heart beats. The bottom (diastolic) shows the pressure in your arteries when your heart rests.

You have high blood pressure if you usually have a top number of 130 or higher or a bottom number of 80 or higher.

### Heart Attack Warning Signs

Call 911 right away if you have:

- chest pain or pressure
- pain moving to your arm, neck, jaw, back or abdomen
- unexplained nausea, heartburn or both
- shortness of breath.

## ■ Valve disease

When one or more of your heart valves no longer opens or closes right, blood can flow in the wrong direction. This is called regurgitation.

If the opening of the valve is narrow or smaller than usual, your heart has to work harder to pump blood through it. This is called valve stenosis. Your heart becomes thickened or enlarged. It will lose the ability to pump well.

## Symptoms of Heart Failure

Symptoms of heart failure may develop slowly over days or weeks. They may also develop quickly. Get help as soon as you have symptoms. If you do not, you may need stay in the hospital to get the symptoms under control.

Common symptoms are:

- **difficulty breathing.** This is caused by fluid build-up in your lungs. You may feel like you can't get enough air. You are often short of breath or out of breath when you are active.
- **waking up breathless at night** with or without a dry, hacking cough that may get worse when you lie down. This is caused by the fluid build-up in your lungs. You may need extra pillows so you can breathe easier when you lie down.
- **swelling in your feet, ankles, legs, hands, and/or lower back (edema).** This is caused by extra fluid in your tissues. Swelling can be worse at the end of the day or if you have been standing or sitting for a long time.

Check for swelling by pressing on your ankle or foot with your finger. If you leave an indented fingerprint, it is a sign of edema. Call your health care team.



- **swelling in your abdomen (ascities).** This is caused by fluid build-up in the tissue of your abdomen. Swelling (or bloating) in your abdomen may lead to nausea, pain, loss of appetite and shortness of breath.
- **weight gain, even with a loss of appetite.** This is caused by the build-up of fluid in your body. Retaining fluid can make your breathing more difficult or increase swelling.
- **extreme fatigue (tiredness).** This is caused by the lack of oxygen-rich blood to your muscles. As a result, your heart is overworked and you feel tired.
- **dizziness, lightheadedness and lack of concentration.** This is caused by your brain not getting enough blood. It is important to tell your health care team if you are dizzy, lightheaded or if you cannot concentrate.

These may be signs of low blood pressure, an irregular heartbeat or side effects of medicine. Be sure to get up slowly out of a bed or chair.

- **palpitations.** This is the sensation caused by irregular heartbeats. It may be dangerous.

You can manage heart failure symptoms. The earlier you recognize your symptoms and report them to your health care provider, the less time you may need to spend in the hospital. This means your life will be more enjoyable.

**Remember, if you have any symptoms that keep coming back, call your health care provider right away. You may be able to keep yourself out of the hospital.**

**Keep track of your weight and symptoms every day on the Allina Health *Heart Failure Weight Log* calendar.**

## When To Call Your Health Care Provider

Call your health care provider if you:

- gain 3 pounds in 1 day
- gain 5 pounds or more in 1 week
- have swelling in your ankles, legs and abdomen
- have increased fatigue
- have increased shortness of breath on exertion, shortness of breath at night or when lying flat
- have an unexplained cough or a “hacking” night cough
- cough up pink- or blood-tinged phlegm
- have decreased urination during the day, but feel the need to urinate more often at night
- need to sleep with more pillows at night
- feel lightheaded or dizzy
- have nausea, or can’t eat, take medicines or both.

## When To Call 911

Call 911 if you:

- pass out or faint
- become extremely short of breath or are unable to talk due to being breathless
- have severe chest pain that is not helped by nitroglycerin
- have a rapid, racing heartbeat that doesn’t slow down.

## How To Manage Heart Failure

Use the following tips to help you feel better and manage your heart failure.

- Keep all appointments with your health care provider and health team members.
- Take your medicines as directed.
- Carry a current medicine list with you at all times.
- Weigh yourself each day and record your weight.
- Follow a well-balanced diet that includes 1,500 to 2,000 milligrams (mg) of sodium each day.
- Maintain a healthy weight. Ask your health team members for help if you are overweight or underweight.
- Bring this book and your weight and activity records to all of your appointments.
- Exercise every day (as directed by your health care team) and be sure to get enough rest.
- Do not smoke and avoid secondhand smoke.
- Be aware of the stress in your life and try to find ways to relieve it.

## Medicines: What You Need To Know

Taking your medicine as directed is **very important**. If you do, they will help you feel better and help your heart work with less stress. You will need to take medicines for the rest of your life.

Your health care provider may start you on one or more medicines. Your provider may change the dose or add other medicines later. This will depend on your symptoms and how well you respond to the medicines.

It may take many days or weeks to find the right doses, combinations of medicines or both. This will take patience as you and your health care team work together to find the:

- right medicines for you
- right amount of each medicine
- best time of the day to take each medicine.

If you are worried about how to pay for your medicines, talk with your health care provider. There may be less costly medicines you may take, or financial help available to you.

### **What to do**

- Take your medicine about the same time each day.
- Have all of your medicines filled at one pharmacy.
- Use a pill box or guide to manage your medicines.
- If you miss a dose, take it as soon as possible.
  - If you do not remember to take it until it is time for your next dose, skip the missed dose and return to your regular dose schedule.
  - **Do not double up on missed doses unless your health care provider tells you to do so.**
- Keep **all** medicines (prescription, over-the-counter, herbals and vitamins) out of reach of children and pets.
- Keep all medicines away from heat, light and humidity. Do not keep medicines in the bathroom or near the kitchen sink.
- Plan ahead for vacations. Don't be caught without enough of your medicines when you are away from home.
- Allow extra time for refills if you use a mail order pharmacy.

- Check with your airline for details about bringing medicines on board.
- If you are seeing more than one doctor, be sure to tell each one which medicines you are taking.

### **What not to do**

- Don't let your medicines run out. Call your pharmacy at least 1 week for refills before you need a refill.
- Don't take medicines prescribed for someone else.
- Don't take any more than the prescribed dose of any medicine.
- Don't keep outdated medicine you no do not need.
- Don't stop taking your medicines unless you have talked with your health care provider.
- Avoid grapefruit and grapefruit juice.

### **Bring your medicines to your clinic visits**

Put your medicine bottles and boxes into a bag and bring it with you to your appointments.

Include all:

- prescription medicines
- over-the-counter medicines
- herbal
- natural products.

Medicines can work against each other so your health care provider needs to know what you are taking.

## Over-the-counter Medicines

Read the labels of all over-the-counter medicines you take. Ask your pharmacist or health care provider if they are safe for you.

**Caution:** Many stores have their own generic brands of medicines. Check with your pharmacist or health care provider before using any over-the-counter and generic medicines.

### The safest cough and cold medicines for you are:

- chlorpheniramine (Chlortrimeton<sup>®</sup> or AllerChlor<sup>®</sup>)
- guaifenesin with dextromethorphan (Robitussin DM<sup>®</sup>)
- loratadine (Claritin<sup>®</sup>).

### Cough and cold medicines you should not take:

- pseudoephedrine (Sudafed<sup>®</sup>, Actifed<sup>®</sup>, Comtrex<sup>®</sup> and Nyquil<sup>®</sup>)
- phenylephrine (Neo-Synephrine<sup>®</sup>)
- ephedrine (also known as “ma huang”) or any kind of appetite suppressant (such as Metabolife<sup>®</sup>).

Sodium causes your body to retain fluid. This increases your blood pressure and makes your heart work harder.

### The following medicines are high in sodium:

- Vicks 44<sup>®</sup> Cough Syrup Vicks 44<sup>®</sup> Cough Relief
- Alka-Seltzer<sup>®</sup>
- Fleets<sup>®</sup> Phospho-Soda and Fleets<sup>®</sup> enema.

The following medicines may cause you to retain sodium and fluid:

- ibuprofen (Nuprin<sup>®</sup>, Advil<sup>®</sup> and Motrin<sup>®</sup> and many other brands)
- ketoprofen (Orudis KT<sup>®</sup>, Actron<sup>®</sup>)
- naproxen (Aleve<sup>®</sup>).

## **Medicine Interactions**

When you take many medicines, they may interact with each other. This means one medicine may affect how well another one works.

Medicines that may affect each other include prescription and over-the-counter medicines.

Ask your health care provider or pharmacist about any possible interactions before you start a new medicine.

## **Keep Track of Your Medicines**

- Keep an updated medicine list in your purse or wallet.
- Consider using a pill organizer.
- Have a plan for organizing your medicine or doses if any of your prescriptions are changed by your doctor over the phone.
- Ask a loved one or friend to help you with your medicines, if you need.

## **Do Not Use Tobacco**

You can help your heart by living a healthy lifestyle.

People who smoke cigarettes are 2 to 4 times more likely to develop heart disease than people who do not smoke. They are at an increased risk for heart attack, stroke, circulatory problems, cancer and lung disorders.

Cigarette smoke contains more than 7,000 chemicals. More than 70 can cause cancer. Tobacco use is the most preventable cause of death in the U.S.

Tobacco products include cigarettes, electronic nicotine delivery systems (ENDS, includes e-cigarettes), cigars, smokeless tobacco (dip or chew), hookahs, pipes, roll-your-own, and oral nicotine products.

### **What tobacco does to your heart**

Tobacco use is especially dangerous to your blood vessels and arteries. It can cause atherosclerosis, a build-up of plaque (fatty substances found in your blood). Over time, the plaque hardens and narrows your blood vessels and arteries.

Smoking also makes the blood vessels and arteries sticky. This leads to “obstructions” in blood flow, meaning that your blood cannot flow easily. The side effects of using tobacco can result in needing stents, coronary artery bypass surgery or both to keep your blood vessels and arteries open. It can also lead to heart attack or stroke.

Tobacco use:

- causes heart disease and stroke
- increases your heart rate
- increases your blood pressure
- lowers your good (HDL) cholesterol



- can cause irregular heart beats
- makes your heart work harder (adding stress to scarred or weakened blood vessels and arteries)
- can interfere with how well your heart medicines work
- causes heartburn and peptic ulcers
- can delay healing from surgery.

A damaged heart has to try to cope with the effects of tobacco. Quitting smoking and avoiding secondhand smoke can help reverse heart and blood vessel damage and reduce your heart disease risk.

### **What secondhand smoke does to your body**

Secondhand smoke is a mixture of smoke coming from the burning tips of cigarettes, pipes and cigars and smoke exhaled by someone who is smoking.

Anyone around secondhand smoke breathes in the chemicals from the tobacco smoke. Secondhand smoke causes death and disease in people who do not smoke.

#### **Did You Know**

Smoking near an open window, blowing smoke out of a room with a fan, using an air filter, or smoking outside does not prevent secondhand smoke.

The only way to protect your family from secondhand smoke is to live in a smoke-free environment. No amount of secondhand smoke is safe.

### **Quitting tobacco use**

Quitting may be hard but it is not impossible. To get help quitting, talk with a member of your health care team. Within 8 hours of quitting, the carbon monoxide level in your blood drops to normal. The oxygen level in your blood increases to normal.

Studies show that the most successful way to quit uses counseling, medicines and follow-up. Ask your health care provider for more information.

## Resources for quitting

### Allina Health (if you had a recent hospital stay)

- Tobacco Intervention Program at Abbott Northwestern Hospital  
— 612-863-1648
- Tobacco Intervention Program at Mercy Hospital  
— 763-236-8008
- Tobacco Intervention Program at River Falls Area Hospital  
— 715-307-6075
- Tobacco Intervention Services at Allina Health United Hospital – Hastings Regina Campus  
— 715-307-6075
- \*United Hospital Lung and Sleep Clinic Tobacco Cessation Program  
— 651-726-6200
- \*Penny George™ Institute for Health and Healing (LiveWell Center) tobacco intervention coaching  
— 612-863-5178

**\*There may be a cost to you. Check with your insurance provider.**

## Other

### ■ Quit Partner

— 1-800-QUIT-NOW  
(1-800-784-8669) or  
quitpartnermn.com

— My Life, My Quit™  
(ages 13 to 17): text  
“Start My Quit”  
to 36072 or call  
1-855-891-9989 to  
talk with a coach

— American Indian:  
1-833-9AI-QUIT or aiQuit.com

— Spanish: 1-855-DEJELO-YA (1-855-335-3569)  
or quitpartnermn.com/es

— asiansmokersquitline.org

### ■ online tobacco cessation support

— smokefree.gov

### ■ American Lung Association/Tobacco Quit Line

— 651-227-8014 or 1-800-586-4872

### ■ \*Mayo Clinic Nicotine Dependence Center’s Residential Treatment Program

— 1-800-344-5984 or 1-507-266-1930

## Product-specific Resources

### ■ financial aid Nicotrol® inhaler

— 1-844-989-PATH (7284)

— pfizerrxpathways.com

### ■ Plant Extracts aromatherapy

— 1-877-999-4236

— plantextractsinc.com

## Why You Need to Control Sodium (Salt)

Eating a healthful diet is an important part of managing heart failure. When you eat foods low in sodium, your heart won't have to work as hard to pump blood.

When you eat a lot of sodium, your body holds, or retains, more water. The extra water in your body causes your heart to work harder to pump blood throughout your body.

You will have fewer heart failure symptoms and you will feel better if you:

- Limit the amount of sodium you eat to keep from retaining extra fluids.
- Maintain a good weight for you.
- Eat healthful, well-balanced meals.
- Talk with your health care provider about the use of caffeine and alcohol.
- Limit sodium to 1,500 to 2,000 milligrams (mg) each day.

## Ways to Reduce Sodium in Your Diet

- **Remove the salt shaker.** Do not have it in the kitchen when you cook or on the table when you eat.
- **Learn to read food labels.** Low sodium is 140 mg or lower per serving.
- **Beware of commercially prepared salt substitutes.** Your health care provider must OK the use of a salt substitute because it can interfere with some medicines or medical conditions.
- **Eliminate salt in your cooking.**
- **Eliminate obviously salty foods.** These include: flavored or seasoned salts; pickles, olives and sauerkraut packaged in salt brine; canned soups; and salted snacks.

- Try new seasonings.

## Why You Need To Control Potassium

Potassium is a mineral that occurs naturally in your body. It is important to have the right amount of potassium in your body. If you have too much or too little, it can affect your heart rhythm.

Some medicines may increase the amount of potassium in your body while others may cause it to drop.

You may need to avoid or eat more foods high in potassium. Ask your health care team about what is right for you.

## Get Regular Exercise and Activity

Regular exercise is important to strengthen your muscles, including your heart. **Caution:** Never start an exercise program before talking with your health care provider.

If you are new to exercise, getting into an exercise routine can be a challenge. Stick with it! After a few days or weeks you may begin to see or feel these positive changes:

- more confidence and independence
- more energy to do your everyday activities
- less difficulty reducing or maintaining weight
- more strength and endurance
- increased flexibility and balance
- more energy to participate in special events
- improved feeling of well-being and a reduction in stress
- better quality sleep.

## Basic Exercise Guidelines

Start your exercise program slowly. Choose an exercise you enjoy, such as walking, riding a stationary bike, swimming or gardening. If you can tolerate exercise, slowly increase what you are doing by adding 5 minute each day.

Use the following general exercise guidelines.


- Wear layers of loose-fitting clothing. Wear comfortable athletic shoes.
- Wait up to 2 hours after eating a full meal and after taking most medicines to exercise.
- Do your exercising in comfortable temperatures. If the weather is too hot or cold, exercise indoors.
- Warm up for 5 to 10 minutes until low-level activity slowly raises your heart rate.
- Drink six to eight ounces of water before you exercise unless you are on a fluid restriction.
- Stretch in slow, controlled movements that extend your muscle fibers and put your joints through their full range of motion. (Do not bounce while you stretch.)
- Do aerobic exercise that uses large muscle groups nonstop and raises your heart rate (like biking, walking and swimming).
- At the end of your workout, do low-level activity and stretching that slowly allows your heart rate to return to normal and helps you cool down.
- Drink 6 to 8 ounces of water after you exercise unless you are on a fluid restriction.
- Do not exercise if you are not feeling well (such as a cold, the flu or a temperature higher than 100 F).

- If you smoke, quit! Your health care provider can give you information on quitting smoking. If you cannot quit, do not smoke one hour before or after you exercise.
- Do not take a hot or cold shower or bath for at least 15 minutes before or after exercise.
- Do not drink alcohol right before or after exercise.
- Avoid exercises that involve straining, pushing, pulling or heavy lifting when there is little or no movement of your body or if you have to hold your breath.
- Be careful of exercises in which both arms are above your head for a long time. This can lead to fatigue.

## **Signs You Should Stop Exercising**

You always need to be aware of the way your body responds to what you are doing. This will tell you if you are working at a level that is good for you. The following signs mean your body is not dealing well with exercise:

- dizzy or lightheaded feelings
- nausea and vomiting
- cold sweat
- shortness of breath that makes talking difficult
- unusual fatigue or extreme exhaustion
- feeling that your heart is pounding or racing
- fainting or black-out spells
- a feeling that your heart is skipping beats or has become irregular
- chest pain or pressure
- pain or pressure in your neck, jaw, teeth and arm or between your shoulder blades
- any new orthopedic problems, such as joint or muscle pain.



If you have any of the above symptoms, stop what you are doing and rest. If they do not go away after rest, or if they continue to limit your activity, call your health care provider.

**If these symptoms are severe, call 911 and use your nitroglycerin as directed.**

## **Save Your Energy**

Without even knowing it, you may be wasting energy every day. Finding easier ways to do things will give you more energy to do the things you enjoy! The following are ways to save your energy.

### **Plan Ahead**

- Schedule time to exercise. You may find it helpful to combine exercise with another activity. For example, ride your stationary bike while you watch TV.
- Organize your home and work area. Store things where you use them.
- Plan ahead for rest. Schedule rest breaks or naps.
- Use waiting time to relax.
- Schedule time for you.
- Plan for meals.
- Plan for shopping.
- Stay flexible. Even the best plans may need to be changed.



## Pace Yourself

- Pace yourself. Move slowly and easily. Stop and rest often.
- Use your energy wisely. If you get fatigued in mid-afternoon, try cooking and doing housework earlier in the day. Save the midafternoon for lighter activities or a nap.
- Find a balance. Don't try to do everything all in one day.
- Set reasonable goals and make them realistic. For instance, clean only one room a day or decide to just dust.
- Find shortcuts. Avoid having to backtrack.
- Climb stairs safely.
- Use a stepstool or sturdy climbing device when you reach for an object.

## Make Priorities

- Evaluate your priorities. What do you **have** to do, and what do you **want** to do? What can you eliminate or simplify?
- Delegate work. Have family members (including children) help with housework. Also, your community may offer services to help with meals, transportation or chores.
- Eliminate chores that aren't needed.
- Recognize your limits and just say "no."
- Learn to let go.
- Make your health your No. 1 priority.

## Consider Using Equipment to Save Energy

Equipment can help you save energy. You can find these items at medical supply stores, discount stores or local pharmacies. They include:

- bath/shower chairs
- hand-held shower kit
- grab bars
- raised toilet seat
- long-handled sponge
- long-handled shoehorn
- long-handled sock aid.





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