

Heart Failure Discharge Instructions

I understand that I should follow these instructions because I have been treated for Heart Failure.

Follow-up:

- I need to make an appointment to see my Health Care Provider (i.e. doctor or nurse) within 2 weeks of leaving hospital.
- If I have a Specialist doctor, I need to make an appointment for within 6 weeks of leaving hospital.

Report to your Primary Care Provider if you experience any of the following:

- You gain more than **2kg (4 lbs) in 2 days or 2.5kg (5 lbs) in a week**
- You feel more short of breath than usual
- You feel more chest pain or new onset of heart palpitations (racing beats)
- You find it harder to breathe when sleeping or lying down
- You have a cough with frothy sputum

Daily Weights:

I will weigh myself daily if possible, preferably in the morning. I will record weights on a heart failure record or calendar. This will help to track weight gains or losses which can mean a change in fluid. Too much fluid in the body can lead to swelling and more shortness of breath.



Diet:

It is important to follow a low salt (sodium) diet which means not adding salt from the salt shaker, reading food labels, and keeping my sodium intake to less than **2000 mg per day**.



I will limit my fluid or liquid intake if instructed by my health care provider.
I have been told to limit my fluid intake to: _____ litres per day.

1 cup = 8oz = 250ml 4 cups = 1000ml (1 litre)
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- Both of these steps help to reduce swelling and shortness of breath.

Activity:

- It is important to be active each day, balancing rest with periods of exercise or activity.
- I will discuss increasing my activity level with my Health Care Provider.
- Activity or exercise does not have to be hard; walking is an excellent way to improve your health.



Medications:

- I may be asked to take medicines like ACE Inhibitors and beta blockers. These may help me live a longer and healthier life.
- I will bring my prescription and all my medicines to the pharmacy to be relabeled as needed.
- I will take my medicines as prescribed even if I am feeling better. Heart failure medicines usually need to be taken life long. I should not stop taking any medicines before talking to my Health Care Provider.
- I can discuss any side effects with my Health Care Provider. Some side effects can be prevented or lessened with minor changes to my medicines.
- I should have a yearly flu vaccine and a pneumonia vaccine every 5-10 years. Both flu and pneumonia can cause lung infections which can worsen my heart failure.



Common Medications for Heart Failure:

ACE Inhibitors: these are medicines such as ramipril, enalapril, lisinopril, or perindopril. They help the heart to pump better and prevent your heart from getting weaker.

ARB's: these are medicines such as candesartan, losartan, or valsartan. They work much like the ACE inhibitors and are used when there is an allergy to an ACE Inhibitor.

Beta Blockers: these are medicines such as carvedilol, metoprolol or bisoprolol. They reduce how hard your heart has to work and helps the heart to pump better. They also help to prevent and treat irregular heart beats.

Diuretics: these are medicines which are often called water pills, one type is furosemide. They work to improve symptoms by getting rid of extra fluid. Spironolactone is a special diuretic that also blocks some of the side effects of heart failure and helps to keep potassium levels steady when you are taking other diuretics.

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