



Congestive Heart Failure

From Heart Failure to Heart Success



**HUNTSVILLE
HOSPITAL**



Table of Contents

Understanding Heart Failure

What is Congestive Heart Failure (CHF)?	3
Causes of Heart Failure	3
How will I feel?	3

How to live well with Heart Failure

When to call for help	4
Daily weight monitoring	5
Heart Failure Zones	6
Heart Failure medicines	7
How to eat less salt	10
How to read a food label	11
Foods – What I should and should not eat	12
How much can I drink a day?	14
Smoking & alcohol	15
Being active	16
Depression	16

Bringing It All Together

6 steps to living well with Heart Failure	17
Resources	18
Weight log	19

Understanding Heart Failure

What is Congestive Heart Failure (CHF)?

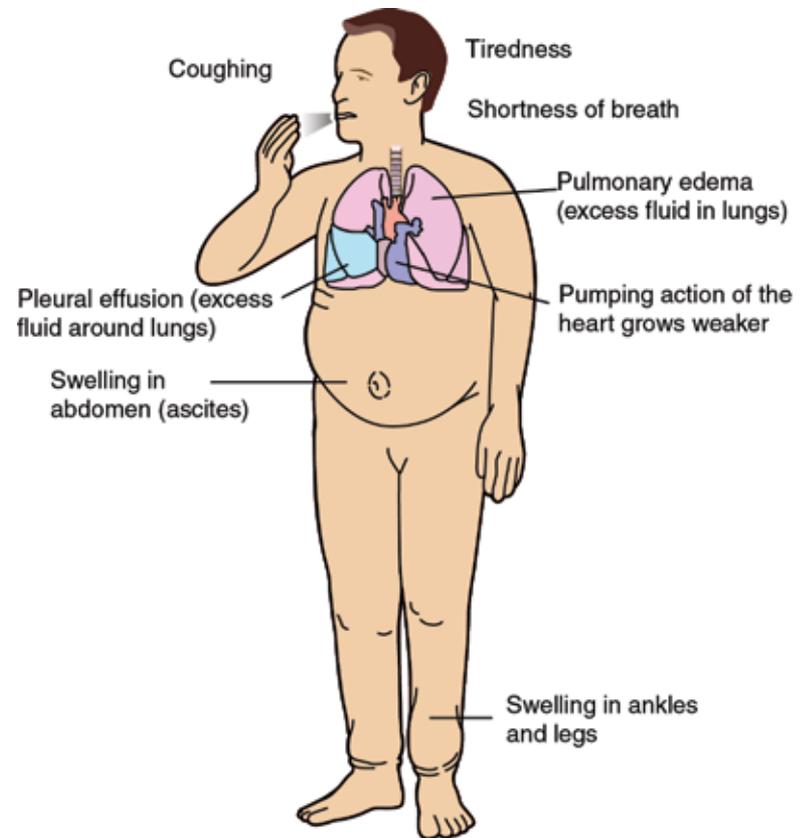
Heart failure does not mean that the heart has stopped, but that the heart cannot pump the blood well. Better control of your blood pressure and diabetes will help your heart pump more easily.

Heart Failure can be caused by:

- Heart attack
- Leaky valves in your heart
- High blood pressure
- Diabetes

What might I feel?

- Short of breath
- Swollen in the belly or legs
- Not as hungry or can not eat as much
- Urge to cough
- Tired
- Dizzy
- Chest pain



How to live well with Heart Failure

When to call for help

Call 9-1-1 for help if you have:

- chest discomfort or pain that lasts more than 15 minutes and does not improve with nitroglycerin or rest.
- severe, continuing shortness of breath
- fainting or passing out
- wake up suddenly struggling to breathe

Call your doctor right away if you:

- have a harder time breathing than normal
- have new shortness of breath while resting
- cannot sleep because you cannot breathe well
- need to sleep sitting up or using more pillows than usual to breathe well
- have fast or funny heart beats that do not stop and/or make you feel dizzy
- cough up foamy white fluid
- feel like you may pass out
- gain more than 3 pounds in one day or 5 pounds in one week





Daily weight monitoring

It is important to monitor your weight

- weight gain is the first sign that your heart failure is getting worse.
- patients can gain up to 10 pounds of “extra” weight from fluid before feeling bad or swelling.

Weigh daily:

- at the same time in the morning, after you urinate (pee).
- while wearing what you sleep in, before eating or drinking.
- using the same scale on a flat, hard surface.

After weighing, write your weight down on the weight log provided in this booklet on page 19 and compare it to your dry weight (your weight on the day you are sent home from the hospital).

If you gain more than 3 pounds in one day or 5 pounds in one week, call your doctor.

Heart Failure Zones

All Clear – Green Zone

- NO shortness of breath
- NO weight gain of more than 2 pounds in one day or 5 pounds in one week
- NO swelling in the feet, ankles, legs or abdomen
- NO chest pain
- NO other significant symptoms

Caution – Yellow Zone (Call your doctor)

- 3 pound weight gain in one day or 5 pounds in one week
- More shortness of breath than normal
- You need to sleep upright in a chair in order to breathe
- MORE swelling in the feet, ankles, legs or abdomen
- Dry, hacking cough
- Feeling more tired than usual
- Dizziness
- Feeling uneasy—you know something is not right

Emergency – Red Zone (Seek help now, call 9-1-1)

- Struggling to breathe
- Unrelieved shortness of breath while sitting still
- Experiencing chest pain
- Feel confused or can't think clearly



Heart Failure medications

Most people with heart failure will need more than 3 medicines. You may be given any of the following medicines.

Ace Inhibitors

What they do:

- Lower blood pressure
- Make it easier for the heart to pump

Possible side effects:

- Low blood pressure (may make you feel dizzy)
- Dry cough
- Swelling of mouth, lips or tongue (call your doctor immediately)

Aldosterone Receptor Antagonists

What they do:

- A water pill that helps get rid of salt and fluid while keeping potassium

Possible side effects:

- Increased potassium
- Low blood pressure
- Gynecomastia – overgrowth of breast in men

Anticoagulants

What they do:

- Thin the blood to prevent blood clots

Possible side effects:

- Bruising
- Bleeding

ARBs

What they do:

- Lower blood pressure and decrease the workload of the heart
- May be prescribed in place of an ACE Inhibitor

Possible side effects:

- Low blood pressure (may make you feel dizzy)
- Swelling of the mouth, lips or tongue
(call your doctor immediately)

Beta-Blockers

What they do:

- Lower blood pressure and slow down heart rate
- May strengthen the heart's pumping action over time

Possible side effects:

- Low blood pressure (may make you feel dizzy)
- Low heart rate
- Tiredness
- Erectile dysfunction

Diuretics (Water Pills)

What they do:

- Help get rid of water through urination (peeing), which will help you breathe better and have less swelling

Possible side effects:

- Low blood pressure (may make you feel dizzy)
- High blood sugar
- Gout

Digoxin[®]

What it does:

- Helps the heart pump better

Possible side effects:

- Slow heart rate
- Yellow-tinted vision
- Not as hungry
- Stomach pain, nausea or vomiting, diarrhea
- Funny feeling heart beats
- Tiredness or weakness

Hydralazine and Nitrates

What they do:

- Together, they open veins and arteries so the heart does not have to pump as hard.

Possible side effects:

- Low blood pressure
- Rash, fever, joint pain, swelling

Potassium

What it does:

- An electrolyte your body needs to function properly
- You can have too much or too little potassium which can be caused by some medications. Always have your labs drawn as your doctor orders.

Possible side effects:

- Muscle weakness
- Funny heart beats



How to be successful with medications:

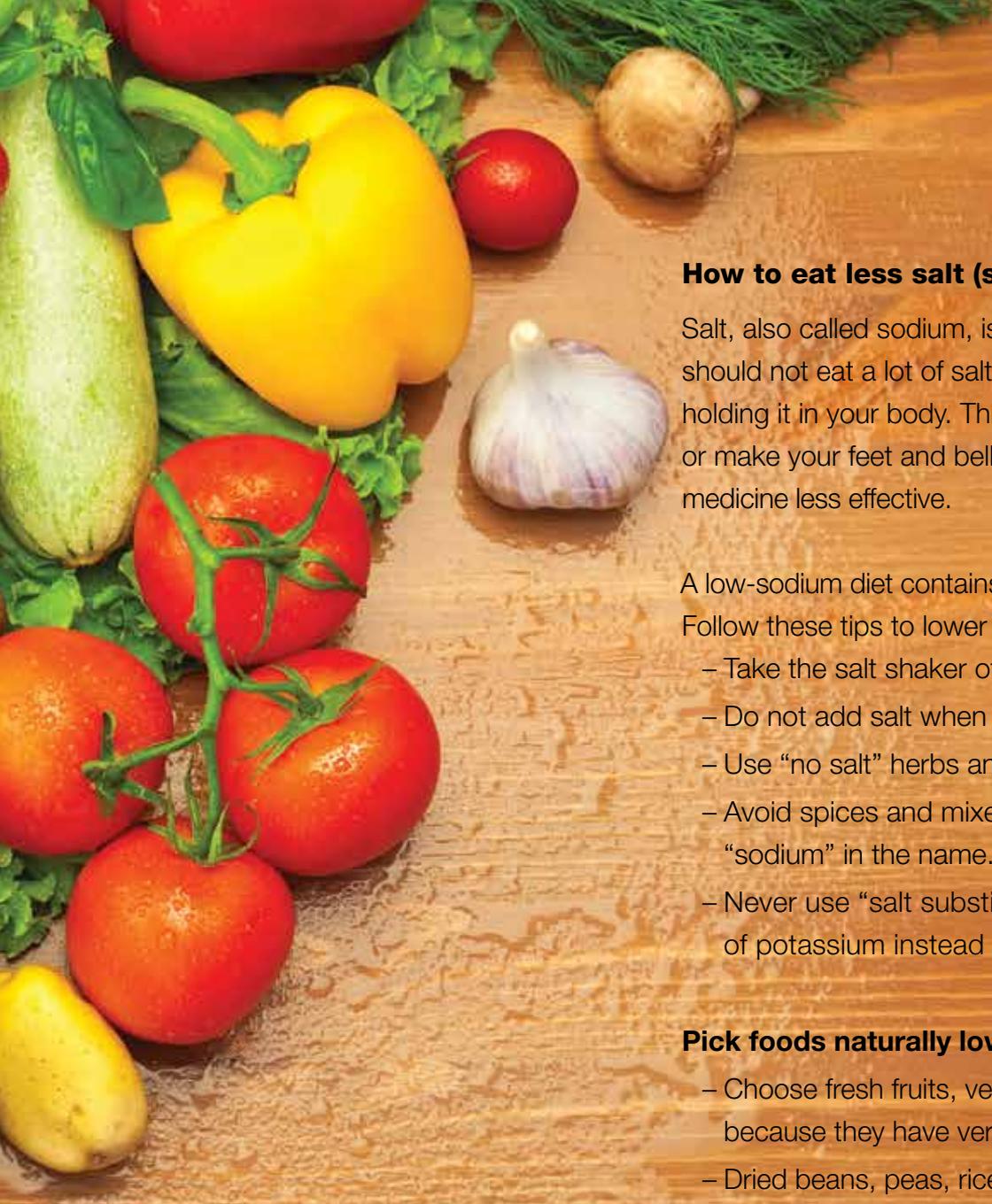
- Take all of your medicines as instructed by your doctor or pharmacist
- Do not skip doses unless instructed by your doctor
- Bring all your medicines with you to all appointments in their original prescription bottles
- Tell your doctor about any herbal medicines you are taking
- Make sure you have enough medicine to last until your next refill

Avoid the following over-the-counter medicines:

- Aleve (Naproxen Sodium)
- Advil (Ibuprofen)
- Antacids high in sodium
- Some herbal medicines

Ask your doctor what you can take for pain

Please note: *This list of side effects is not all inclusive. Please refer to the package insert and notify your physician if side effects occur. Please be compliant with any labs or testing ordered to monitor drug effects.*



How to eat less salt (sodium)

Salt, also called sodium, is found in many foods. Heart Failure patients should not eat a lot of salt. Salt acts like a sponge—soaking up fluid and holding it in your body. This extra fluid can make it harder for you to breathe, or make your feet and belly swell. Too much salt can also make your medicine less effective.

A low-sodium diet contains no more than 2,000 mg of sodium per day. Follow these tips to lower the salt in your diet.

- Take the salt shaker off the table.
- Do not add salt when cooking.
- Use “no salt” herbs and spices like Mrs. Dash.
- Avoid spices and mixes with the word “salt” or “sodium” in the name.
- Never use “salt substitutes” (contain high amounts of potassium instead of salt).

Pick foods naturally low in sodium.

- Choose fresh fruits, vegetables, poultry and fish because they have very little sodium.
- Dried beans, peas, rice and lentils are excellent low-salt/sodium choices as long as you don’t add salt, pork or bacon grease when cooking them.

Nutrition Facts	
Serving Size 1/2 cup (120g)	
Servings Per Container About 3.5	
Amount Per Serving	
Calories 20	Calories from Fat 0
% Daily Value*	
Total Fat 0g	0%
Saturated Fat 0g	0%
Trans Fat 0g	
Cholesterol 0mg	0%
Sodium 30mg	1%
Total Carbohydrate 4g	1%
Dietary Fiber 2g	8%
Sugars 2g	
Protein less than 1g	
Vitamin A 4%	• Vitamin C 4%
Calcium 2%	• Iron 0%
*Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet.	

Learn to read food labels.

- By reading food labels, you can learn which foods are high and low in sodium.
- Avoid frozen dinners, snack foods, canned vegetables and instant hot cereals.

Things you should not eat

- Bacon, sausage and ham
- Fried foods
- Butter, cheese, sauces and salad dressing

Things you can eat

- Grilled chicken and fish
- Grilled, baked or steamed foods
- Oil and vinegar in place of salad dressing

Reading a food label

Always check the serving size and look at the amount of sodium per serving. This example has 30 mg of sodium in a ½ cup and is a good choice. Try to limit the salt to 140 mg or less per serving of food.

Avoid these high sodium foods



Fast foods



Frozen foods



Processed foods



Cheeses



Processed or deli meats



Canned meats



Canned vegetables



Frozen dinners



Snack foods



Bottled dressings



Bottled condiments

Choose these low sodium foods



Fresh fruits



Fresh vegetables



Fresh chicken



Roast



Fish



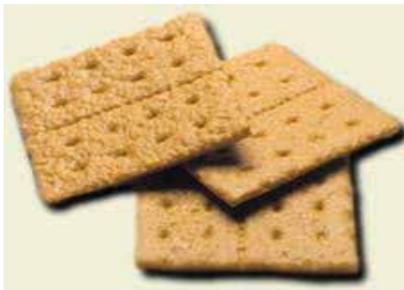
Dried beans



Yogurt



Eggs



Graham crackers



Oatmeal



Frozen vegetables



Fresh herbs

How much can I drink a day?

Drinking too much fluid will cause:

- Weight gain
- Swelling
- Shortness of breath
- Medicines will not work as well

Fluid measurements:

8 cups = 64 oz = 2,000 ml = 2 liters

- Drinking an extra two cups of fluid will cause you to gain a pound of fluid weight
- Think about a 2 liter soda bottle as your guide to most fluid you should have in one day

How to measure fluid intake for the day:

When measuring liquid:

- Use a 2 liter bottle
- When drinking fluid or anything that counts as liquid, pour the same amount of water into the bottle
- When the bottle fills up, you cannot have any more fluid for the day

When measuring ice:

- Put the same amount of ice that you will eat or drink, put it into your bottle and let it melt

What is considered a fluid?

- Anything you drink
- Fluid in soups
- Jello
- Ice

Tips for a dry mouth

- Let a piece of sugar-free, hard candy dissolve in your mouth
- Chew gum
- Freeze 15-18 grapes and eat them slowly, letting them melt in your mouth
- Let ice melt in your mouth (remember, you still have to count the fluid in ice)



Quit smoking

Smoking can make Heart Failure worse. If you want to quit, some successful ideas to help you stop smoking are:

S = Set a start date

T = Tell family, friends and co-workers you are going to quit

A = Ahead of time, plan for what will be hard

R = Remove cigarettes/tobacco from your car, home and work

T = Talk to your doctor about getting help to quit

Huntsville Hospital's Center for Lung Health offers Freedom from Smoking[®] classes, an eight-week tobacco cessation program of the American Lung Association. Call (256) 265-7071 for information.

Avoid alcohol

Alcohol can be harmful for patients with heart failure, so it is best to discuss your drinking with your doctor. Any alcohol (beer, wine, liquor, moonshine) must be added to your fluids for the day.

Being active

Activity goals

- Be physically active 30 minutes a day for most days of the week.
- Break it into 10 minutes of activity 3 times per day.

Walking goals (start slow!)

How to begin:

- Week 1: Walk 5–10 minutes twice a day
- Week 2: Walk 10–20 minutes twice a day
- Week 3: Walk 20–30 minutes each day

You can begin by walking as little as 5 minutes each day and gradually increase.

Signs you are overdoing it

Slow down or stop if any of these happen while you are active:

- Shortness of breath that prevents you from completing a sentence
- Shortness of breath that doesn't get better within 5–10 minutes of stopping the activity
- Dizziness or lightheadedness lasting longer than 10–15 minutes

If you have any of these symptoms while being active, slow down. If the symptoms do not get better, stop the activity.

Call 9-1-1 if your chest pain or other symptoms are not relieved.

Sexual Activity

- Talk openly with your partner about your sexual needs.
- Pick a time for sex when you feel rested.
- Avoid sex after eating a big meal or drinking alcohol.
- Have sex in a comfortable room that is not too hot or too cold.
- Use foreplay to help your heart get ready for sex.
- Do not support your weight with your arms.
- Have sex in less stressful positions such as lying on the bottom or on your side.

Work

Ask your doctor about a “return to work” date and any restrictions you may have.

Depression

- Seeing a counselor can help you with some of your worries and make you feel better.
- Follow your exercise or activity plan doing things you enjoy.
- Get a good night's sleep.
- Follow your treatment plan including taking your medicines as instructed.
- Tell your doctor if you have any feelings of anxiousness, hopelessness, sadness or “empty” mood; if you are irritable, restless or lack energy.

National Suicide Hotline: 1-800-273-8255

Bringing It All Together

6 steps to Heart Failure success

1. Weigh every day.

- At the same time, first thing in the morning
- After you go to the bathroom and urinate (pee)
- Weigh in the clothes you sleep in
- Write down your weight
- Compare it to your dry weight
- Call your doctor if you gain more than 3 pounds in a day or 5 pounds in a week

2. Take your medicines as listed on medicine bottles.

- Do not skip doses even if you feel well
- Let your doctor know if you are having side effects to your medicines
- Check your medicine bottles every week to make sure you do not run out
- Taking your diabetes and blood pressure medicine as directed will also help you manage your Heart Failure

3. Limit salt and fluids.

- Read food labels
- Keep your total salt intake to 1 teaspoon/day (2,000 mg)
- Don't add salt to your foods at the table or while cooking
- Keep total fluids to 2 liters

4. Follow your activity program.

- Moving will help you have more energy and feel better
- Start slow and stop exercising if you feel chest pain, become dizzy or so short of breath you can not finish a sentence
- Speak with your doctor about resuming sexual activity.

5. Know when to get help.

- Call 9-1-1 if you have chest pain that lasts more than 15 minutes and is not better with nitroglycerin and rest or have severe shortness of breath, fainting or passing out
- Call your doctor if you are in the “Yellow” or “Red” Zone

6. Keep all your medical appointments.

- Bring your medications and weight log each time you visit the doctor
- Follow through with lab draws or other ordered tests

Resources

American Heart Association

heart.org/HEARTORG/Conditions/HeartFailure/Heart-Failure_UCM_002019_SubHomePage.jsp

CASA

(256) 533-7775

Specializes in winterizing homes, transportation (age 60+), ramps, grab bars (not age dependent) and donated medical equipment.

The Cleveland Clinic

clevelandclinicmeded.com/medicalpubs/diseasemanagement/cardiology/heart-failure/

Community Free Clinic

410 Sivley Road SW
Huntsville, AL 35801
(256) 533-2910

hsvfreeclinic.org

Provides free health care, education and medications to people in Madison County without health care benefits.

National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute

nhlbi.nih.gov/health/health-topics/topics/hf

Senior RX

100 North Side Square

Huntsville, AL 35801

(256) 532-3345

Offers seniors (age 55+) assistance with medication and transportation.

TARCOG

(256) 830-0818

Elder services (extended care)

Sources for this publication:

Huntsville Hospital Congestive Heart Failure Clinic

Heart Failure Society of America

UpToDate

Daily Weight Log

Sunday		Monday		Tuesday		Wednesday		Thursday		Friday		Saturday	
Date:	Zone	Date:	Zone	Date:	Zone	Date:	Zone	Date:	Zone	Date:	Zone	Date:	Zone
													
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Goal / Dry Weight: _____

**Take this with you when you go to the doctor.



Heart Failure Clinic
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Huntsville, AL 35801
Phone: (256) 265-6566
Fax: (256) 265-6881



To support this program – Please contact us!
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(256) 265-8077 | huntsvillehospitalfoundation.org

Every gift makes a difference! Your tax deductible donation to the Foundation will help provide lifesaving equipment, as well as health and hope to our patients.