

heart failure | ACTION PLAN & DIARY



Contact Numbers

NAME

MEDICAL RECORD NUMBER

PRIMARY CARE PHYSICIAN

CARE MANAGER

CARDIOLOGIST

AFTER-HOURS URGENT CARE/ADVICE

24-HOUR PRESCRIPTION REFILL

HEALTH EDUCATION

Using This Action Plan and Diary

This action plan and diary is a self-care guide for managing your heart failure. Your responsibility is to practice the treatment recommendations discussed by you and your health care team. If you have questions or need more information, talk with your physician.

This tool will help you keep yourself as healthy as possible. Keep it with you even when you are traveling.

Targets

Weight _____ pounds

Sodium _____ mg/day

Limit fluid _____ ounces or cups/day (if advised)

Early Warning Signs and Symptoms of Worsening Heart Failure

- Sudden weight gain: 2 to 3 pounds in a day, or 5 pounds or more in a week
- Shortness of breath or not able to breathe lying down
- Swelling of the feet, legs, ankles, or stomach
- Weakness and fatigue
- Cough that does not go away
- Waking up at night coughing or short of breath
- Irregular heart rate

If you have the above symptoms, either:

- Call your physician
- OR
- Follow the flexible diuretic plan self-care instructions on page 3

Call your physician if you have:

Side effects from medications that are different or occur more often than usual

Call 911 if you have:

- Severe shortness of breath
- Chest discomfort, pain, or pressure not relieved by rest or nitroglycerin
- Profuse sweating and pale color
- Coughing up pink, frothy sputum

Flexible Diuretic Plan

To be used only if you have been told to by your physician.

DATE: _____

My usual diuretic dosage is: _____

My usual potassium dosage is: _____

DAY 1

Take your extra dosage of diuretic and potassium.

My extra diuretic dosage is: _____

My extra potassium dosage is: _____

DAY 2

- If symptoms are better, go back to your usual medication schedule.
- If symptoms continue but do not get worse, take an extra diuretic for one more day.

If symptoms get worse, or are not better after Day 2:

- Call your _____
at _____, or
- Request a same-day appointment.
Call _____, or
- If it is after hours or a weekend,
call _____.

All the following actions will help you manage your heart failure and stay healthy.



Daily Weight

Sudden or steady weight gain can be a warning sign that your body is holding on to fluid. Weigh yourself daily.

- Get up in the morning and go to the bathroom.
- Step on your scale wearing the same amount of clothing each day.
- Date the box in the diary pages and record your weight. Later on, record medications taken and symptoms (if any).
- Compare today's weight with yesterday's weight. If you gain more than 2 to 3 pounds within a day, or 5 pounds or more in a week, talk with your physician or follow the flexible diuretic plan self-care instructions on page 3.

Medications

Medications for heart failure reduce the work your heart has to do, strengthen your heartbeat, and remove extra water from your body.

- Take your medications on a regular schedule.
- It is important to keep a medication schedule, such as the one in the manual called *Heart Failure: Taking Care of Yourself*.
- Use an alarm clock or watch as a reminder to take your medications on time.
- Use a pill box to help you organize your daily doses.
- Refill your prescriptions when you are down to a two-week supply. Do not let your prescriptions run out.

- Do not stop medication, change the dose, or take another medication unless told to do so by your physician.
- If you miss a dose and it is close to your next dose, skip the missed dose. Do not double your next dose.
- Learn the generic and brand names, doses, side effects, and the reasons for taking your medications.

Notes:

Sodium

People with heart failure need to eat less salt. Salt is made up mostly of sodium. Sodium acts like a sponge to hold extra fluid in the body, making it harder for the heart to pump.

Try these tips to lower your sodium:

- Limit your total sodium each day to less than 2,400 milligrams. Talk to your physician about the right level of sodium for you.
- Don't add salt to food when you cook or at the table. Ask your physician about a salt substitute.
- Use herbs, spices, pepper, and lemon juice to add flavor.
- Read food labels for sodium in processed, canned, and frozen foods. Eighty percent of the sodium we eat is in processed foods.
- Choose fresh foods and foods labeled "low sodium" or "no added salt."
- Eat out less often. Most restaurant foods have a lot of sodium.

Activity and Exercise

Moderate physical activity helps you tire less quickly and makes you feel better overall. Ask your physician about your physical activity prescription.

- Choose activities that you enjoy, such as walking and gardening.
- Aim for at least 30 minutes, 5 days a week.
- Ask a friend or family member to join your activity.
- Remember to balance activities with rest.
- Call Wellness Coaching by Phone at 1-866-862-4295 for help getting active.

Report symptoms and/or problems to your physician.

PERSONAL ACTION PLAN

It's time to take action!

A **goal** is something you want to accomplish but may take a while to achieve, such as losing weight.

Action plans are short-term plans that help you reach your goal. They must include a specific action or behavior that you **want** to do and know that you will be able to accomplish. Your plan must answer the questions:

→ *What* are you going to do?

→ *How much* are you going to do?

→ *When* are you going to do it?

→ *How many* days a week are you going to do it?

Notes:

My goal is:

MY ACTION PLAN

This week I will:

(what)

(how much)

(when)

(how many)

How **important** is it to you to make this change?



0 = not important at all

10 = very important

Notes:

Ideas for Heart Failure Action Plans

Check off the actions that you are willing to do to manage your heart failure and stay healthy:

- I will use this diary (or a similar one) every day until told to stop.
- I will weigh myself at the same time each day, using the same scale, wearing the same amount of clothing.
- I will avoid foods high in sodium.
- I will take all medications as prescribed.
- I will know the signs and symptoms of heart failure and what to report to my health care team.
- I will quit tobacco. I will call Wellness Coaching by Phone at 1-866-862-4295 for help.

- I will walk for 30 minutes, 5 days a week.
- I will limit alcohol (I will talk to my physician).
- I will _____
- I will _____



Daily monitoring helps **you** control your health.

Date	Weight	Pressure	Blood Sugar a.m.	Swelling No/Same/More	Shortness of Breath No/Same/More	Activity Easier/ Harder	Other Symptoms, Comments
M							
T							
W							
Th							
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Comments:

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Comments:



The information presented here is not intended to diagnose health problems or to take the place of professional medical care.

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Center for Healthy Living

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