

<i>Client:</i>	<i>Date:</i>
<i>Clinician:</i>	

The term “heart failure” sounds scary but it doesn't mean that your heart will suddenly stop. It means the heart is not doing its job as well as it should. Heart failure happens when your heart muscle cannot keep up with your body's need for blood flow. Symptoms of heart failure can be controlled by changes in your lifestyle and by following your doctor's advice.

Home Care

- Work hard to remove the salt from your diet.
 - Limit canned, dried, packaged, and fast foods.
 - Don't add salt to your food at the table.
 - Season foods with herbs instead of salt when you cook.
- Ask your doctor about an exercise program. You can benefit from simple activities such as walking or gardening. Don't be discouraged if your progress is slow at first.
- Break the smoking habit. Enroll in a stop-smoking program.
- Weigh yourself every day. Do this at the same time of day and in the same kind of clothes.
- Rest as needed.
- Recognize that your health and even survival depend on your following medical recommendations.
- Avoid exposure to temperature extremes, such as hot tubs and saunas.
- Take your medications exactly as prescribed. Don't skip doses. If you miss a dose of your medication, take it as soon as you remember—unless it's almost time for your next dose. In that case, just wait and take your next dose at the normal time. Don't take a double dose.

Ways to Feel Better

- Spend time doing things you enjoy. This may include participating in a favorite hobby, meditating, praying, or spending time with people you care about.
- Share what you learn about heart failure with the people in your life.
- Try not to withdraw from family and friends, even if you are finding it hard to talk to them

When to Call Your Nurse or Doctor

- Sudden weight gain (3 or more pounds in one day or 5 or more pounds in one week)
- Trouble breathing not related to being active
- New or increased swelling of your legs or ankles
- Swelling or pain in your abdomen
- Breathing trouble at night (waking up short of breath, needing more pillows to breathe)
- Frequent coughing that doesn't go away
- Feeling much more tired than usual

Adapted from Clinical Pathways for the Multidisciplinary Home Care Team Volume 2 and Krames On-Line

IMPORTANT NOTICE

Contact the on-call nurse if you are experiencing any change in your current health condition.
 For ALL emergencies requiring IMMEDIATE medical attention, call 911.