



Frederick
Health

A photograph of an elderly Black woman and man smiling and looking at each other outdoors. The woman has short, wavy grey hair and is wearing a yellow top and a green scarf. The man is bald, wearing glasses, and a brown leather vest over a blue shirt. They are standing in front of a blurred background of green trees and a bright sky.

Living with Heart Failure

A Self-Care Guidebook

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About Your Self-Care Guidebook

Frederick Health has created a specialized program for our patients with heart failure. This Guidebook was developed to help you and your family understand and manage heart failure so you can live a more active, happier, and healthier life.

How to use this Self-Care Guidebook

This guidebook is divided into short chapters. Together with your healthcare team, you will review the information at various settings across our healthcare system and be given the opportunity to ask questions and receive further information as needed. You are also encouraged to read the information on your own and write down any questions or concerns that you have so you can discuss them with your health care team. **Please bring this guidebook with you to all healthcare appointments.**

What you can do

Some of the things you can do to manage your heart failure include:

- Learning how heart failure affects your body. This can help you learn how to better take care of yourself
- Learning to pay attention to your body and how you feel. If you notice symptoms, report them right away—this will help your care team provide the best treatment for you.
- Take the medications prescribed by your doctor. This will help your heart work better and keep your heart failure from getting worse
- Make changes in how you eat and live to help your heart

You can find more detailed information on how to take each one of these steps in the following pages of this guidebook.

Special thanks to the Clinical Education Department at the Visiting Nurse Service of New York, the original authors of this guidebook. Frederick Health has adopted portions of this guide as part of our specialized care program for patients living with Heart Failure with permission of the Visiting Nurse Service of New York.

What is Heart Failure?

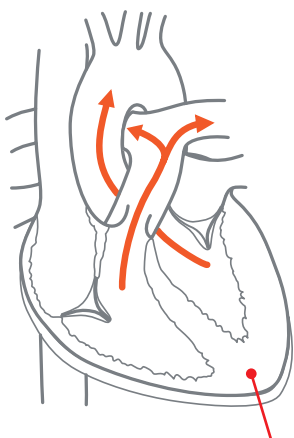
The heart is a muscle that is normally the size of your fist. As the heart beats, it pumps blood to the lungs where the blood receives oxygen. The heart then pumps the oxygen-rich blood to the brain, organs legs, and arms. After the body uses up the oxygen in the blood, the blood returns to the heart and the cycle starts over with the next heartbeat.

Heart Failure occurs when the heart is weak and doesn't pump as well as it should to deliver oxygen-rich blood throughout the body. Heart Failure starts slowly and can worsen over time. How serious the condition is depends on how much pumping ability the heart has lost.

There are two types of heart failure, diastolic and systolic, and it is common to have both.

Diastolic Heart Failure

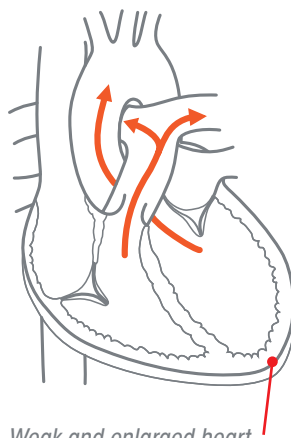
The heart walls become stiff or thickened, and do not relax as well between heartbeats. This keeps the ventricles from filling completely with blood. It prevents the heart from pumping enough blood to the lungs and body.



Stiff and thickened heart wall

Systolic Heart Failure

The heart muscle becomes weak and enlarges. When the ventricles squeeze, they can't pump enough blood out of the heart because of their weakened condition.



Weak and enlarged heart

What is Ejection Fraction?

Ejection Fraction (EF) measures how much blood the heart pumps out (ejects). This is a measure to help diagnose heart failure. A normal EF is around 50% or more. Ask your doctor for your Ejection Fraction.

MY EJECTION FRACTION IS

DATE

WHAT IS HEART FAILURE?

How Heart Failure affects your body

The heart is weakened due to heart failure and not enough blood is leaving the heart with each heartbeat. Fluid backs up in the lungs, legs, arms, abdomen, and other tissues. Less blood moving through your body means your organs receive less oxygen. This makes you short of breath, weak, and tired.

What are the symptoms of Heart Failure?



Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing



Swelling of feet and legs



Chronic lack of energy



Difficulty sleeping at night due to breathing problems



Swollen or tender abdomen with loss of appetite



Cough with frothy sputum



Increased urination at night



Confused and/or impaired memory

WHAT IS HEART FAILURE?

What causes Heart Failure?

Heart failure is caused by damage to the heart muscle. This damage is often caused by another form of heart disease or heart condition. There are a number of risk factors for heart failure—some of these can't be controlled, but some can.

Uncontrollable Risk Factors

Increased age
Male sex (gender)
Heredity (including race)

Controllable Risk Factors

Exposure to toxins (excessive alcohol, tobacco smoke)
High Blood Cholesterol
High Blood Pressure
Physical Inactivity
Obesity /Overweight
Diabetes Mellitus
Stress

How is Heart Failure diagnosed?

Diagnosis of heart failure starts with a complete physical exam and medical history taken by your doctor. Other tests will be ordered to confirm the diagnosis and may include:

- A **Chest X-ray** shows if there is fluid in your lungs and an enlargement of your heart.
- An **Electrocardiogram (ECG)** records the electrical signals that pass through your heart
- An **Echocardiogram** uses ultrasound waves that show the structure and movement of the heart. The doctor can see how well your heart pumps, the thickness of the heart walls, and any heart valve problems.
- A **Cardiac Catheterization** assesses heart function. Pictures are taken of the blood vessels that bring blood to the heart, allowing blocked blood vessels to be detected.
- A **Stress Test** reveals how your heart responds to activity or exercise. This may be done on a treadmill or stationary bike. A stress test may also be performed by injecting a medication that affects the heart in the same manner as exercise.
- A **Holter Monitor** is a portable device that is connected to the chest. It detects abnormal heartbeats or changes in the heart's rhythm. It can be worn for several hours or days.

How to Control Your Heart Failure

Monitor your symptoms

It's important to note any symptoms of shortness of breath, swelling in feet or abdomen, cough, weakness, or feeling of an increased heart rate. These will mean that you are retaining water and need to notify your healthcare provider.

Track your pulse

Your pulse rate is the number of times your heart beats in one minute. A normal resting heart beats about 60 to 100 times per minute. Check with your nurse or doctor for your normal range. Some medications (such as Digoxin and high blood pressure medications) can lower your pulse rate. Therefore, your doctor may want you to check your pulse before you take certain medications.

Weigh yourself daily

Weighing yourself every day is recommended for people with heart failure. Rapid weight gain can be a sign of water build-up that leads to shortness of breath and swelling.

Things to consider when weighing yourself:

- Weigh yourself on the same scale every day. Make sure the numbers are easy to read. If you don't have or can't afford a scale, ask your nurse or doctor for suggestions.
- Weigh yourself at the same time every day. The best time is when you wake up, after urinating and before eating.
- Weigh yourself wearing no clothes or the same clothes or towel every day.
- Write down your weight every day. Record it on a weight chart or a calendar. Bring this information to your doctor visits.

Unless your doctor tells you otherwise, call your nurse or doctor if you gain 2lbs or more in one day or 5lbs or more in 7 days or less.

How do I take my pulse?

- Sit quietly for five minutes before you begin.
- Gently place two or three fingers on your wrist just below your thumb (do not press too hard).
- Never use your thumb to take your pulse. This is because your thumb has its own pulse.
- Use a clock or watch with a second hand to time the number of beats you feel in one minute.
- Count the number of beats for 60 seconds (or 30 seconds and multiply by 2). This number is your pulse rate.



HOW TO CONTROL YOUR HEART FAILURE

Take your medications as directed *(see page 8 for more information)*

- Fill your prescriptions right away and renew them before you run out.
- Know what you are taking and how to take it correctly.
- Keep taking all your medications until you are told to stop by your healthcare provider.
- Bring a list of the medications you are taking to each healthcare provider office you visit.
- Call if you think your medications are not helping or if you feel you are having side effects.

Avoid NSAIDs

NSAIDs are non-steroidal anti-inflammatory medications. Some examples are Advil (ibuprofen), Motrin (ibuprofen), and Aleve (Naproxen). These medications can lead to holding extra fluid and cause weight gain and swelling. Check with your doctor before using these medications, or before taking aspirin doses of more than 325mg a day.

Keep your follow-up office visits

Make certain to follow up regularly as directed with your healthcare providers. Take your weight record and medication list with you.

Make changes to your diet *(see page 11 for more information)*

Eat less salt and drink less fluid. Too much salt will cause your body to hold onto water, which will lead to swelling, shortness of breath, and feeling more tired.

Stay active *(see page 21 for more information)*

Stay as active as you feel comfortable and continue your daily activities. Stop and rest if you feel tired or short of breath. Stay indoors if the weather is very hot or very cold. Your heart works harder in these temperatures.

Keep up your immunizations

Get a flu shot each year. Talk to your doctor about a shot to prevent pneumonia.

Managing Your Medications



Heart Failure can be controlled with medications. Following the tips below will help you manage your medications.

- Always take your medication as prescribed by your doctor, even if you are feeling well.
- Check with your physician or pharmacist before taking any over-the-counter or dietary supplements. This includes vitamins, minerals, herbal products, pseudoephedrine.
- Do not increase or decrease the dosage of your medications, or stop taking them without first checking with your doctor.
- Keep an up-to-date list of all medications that you are taking. Include how much and how often.
- Carry your medication list with you in your purse or wallet.
- Keep your medications in their original bottles or containers. The original containers have the correct label and instructions.
- Try using a pill container with daily compartments to organize breakfast, lunch, dinner, and bedtime medications.
- Check the expiration date on all of your medications. Do not use any medications after they expire.
- When you travel, make sure you have extra medications. Keep your medications with you in your carry-on luggage.
- Talk to your doctor before taking any NSAIDs (for example, Aleve, Ibuprofen, Advil, or Motrin).
- For pain, Tylenol is the best option. Do not take more than 3,000mg per day. Topical pain relievers are okay.

MANAGING YOUR MEDICATIONS

Common medications for Heart Failure

Put an X next to any medications you take and find out more about them in the chart below.*

Medication Class	Also Called	How They Work	Possible Side Effects
Angiotensin Converting Enzyme (ACE) Inhibitor	<i>Benazepril</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relaxes blood vessels 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Persistent dry cough
	<i>Captopril</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Makes it easier for heart to pump 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Low blood pressure or dizziness
	<i>Enalapril</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can lower blood pressure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Altered sense of taste
	<i>Fosinopril</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Helps symptoms and helps keep you out of the hospital 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> High potassium levels
	<i>Lisinopril</i>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Swelling of lips, tongue, or throat
	<i>Quinapril</i>		
Angiotensin II Receptor Antagonists (ARB)	<i>Candesartan</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relaxes blood vessels 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Elevated potassium levels
	<i>Irbesartan</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Makes it easier for heart to pump 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Low blood pressure or dizziness
	<i>Losartan</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can lower blood pressure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Kidney issues
	<i>Valsartan</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Usually given to people who cannot take ACE inhibitors 	
Beta Blockers	<i>Atenolol</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Blocks the body's response to certain substances that can make heart failure worse 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lower tolerance for physical activity
	<i>Bisoprolol</i>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fatigue
	<i>Carvedilol</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Helps the heart muscle to not work as hard 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Worsening of breathing in asthma, COPD
	<i>Metoprolol</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lowers blood pressure and heart rate Makes it easier for heart to pump Helps symptoms and helps keep you out of the hospital 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lowered blood pressure Lowered heart rate
Diuretics	<i>Furosemide</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Also know as a "water pill" 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Frequent urination
	<i>Torsemide</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gets ride of excess fluid in your legs, feet, and lungs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Weakness or dizziness
	<i>Bumetanide</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Helps reduce symptoms of shortness of breath and swelling (edema) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lowered blood pressure
	<i>Metolazone</i>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lowered potassium levels
	<i>Hydrochlorothiazide</i>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lowered sodium levels
	<i>Chlorthalidone</i>		

MANAGING YOUR MEDICATIONS

Medication Class	Also Called	How They Work	Possible Side Effects
Aldosterone Antagonist	<i>Spirolactone</i> <i>Eplerenone</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Blocks sodium and water reabsorption Helps prevent further damage to the heart Decreases strain on the heart Added on when heart failure is not controlled Not for all patients—discuss with your doctor 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gynecomastia (enlargement or tenderness of the breast in men) Diarrhea Weakness or dizziness Elevated potassium levels Lowered sodium levels Lowered blood pressure Frequent urination
Vasodilators	<i>Hydralazines</i> <i>Isosorbide</i> <i>Nitroglycerin patch</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Opens up the vessels of the heart Makes it easier for the heart to pump Can lower blood pressure Helps alleviate symptoms Helps keep you out of the hospital 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Weakness or dizziness Headache Flushing Heart palpitations Nasal congestion Lowered blood pressure
Nepriylsin Inhibitor	<i>Sacubitril (In combination with ARP valsartan)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sacubitril increases levels of good peptides, which protect your heart Valsartan helps to open blood vessels to make it easier for the heart to pump 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Elevated potassium levels Lowered blood pressure Swelling of lips, tongue, or throat
Cardiac Glycoside	<i>Digoxin</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Slows and strengthens the heartbeat Helps alleviate symptoms Helps keep you out of the hospital Digoxin blood levels ensure dose is appropriate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Loss of appetite Heart palpitations Lowered heart rate Too high a dose can lead to nausea, vomiting, or changes in vision or heart rhythm

*This table is not a complete list of available medications and does not reflect endorsement of any type or brand of medications. It does not include all actions, adverse reactions, precautions, side effects or interactions for these medications. Talk to your healthcare provider or pharmacist about the possible side effects and drug or food interactions of any medication you use. This should not be used as a substitution for reading the instructions included with your medications or given by your pharmacist.

Manage Heart Failure Through Your Diet

A heart-healthy diet includes a balance of protein (meat/fish/poultry/beans), low-fat dairy products, fruits, vegetables, and grains. It is also low in sodium and low in fat. Good food is like medicine—it can heal and repair your body to make you stronger!

Heart Failure patients are often told to limit sodium, or salt. Sodium (salt) is found in table salt, many foods, drinks, and medicines. Sodium can cause your body to hold on to more fluid (water) than is needed. This fluid buildup in the body makes the heart work harder. It can make your blood pressure rise and may also cause shortness of breath and weight gain.

A certain amount of sodium is needed by your body. The average diet provides more than enough sodium, even if table salt is not added to food. A 2 gram (2,000 mg) sodium diet limits high sodium foods and will keep your body from holding extra fluid. Cutting down on excess sodium or salt is a very important way to keep your heart failure under control.

Steps to cut down on sodium









- Do not add salt to food.
- Remove the salt shaker from your table.
- Read food labels for sodium content and avoid foods high in sodium. The foods you choose should not add up to more than 2 grams (2,000 mg) of sodium in one day.
- Avoid processed and fast foods.
- Use reduced sodium or no added salt seasonings, such as pepper, onion, lemon juice, and fresh or dried herbs to season foods.

Avoid foods high in salt, including:

- Deli Meats
- Ham
- Bacon
- Sausage
- Cheeses
- Pickles
- Canned vegetables
- Canned soup
- Canned meat
- Frozen dinners
- Fast foods
- Salty snacks like crackers and chips

MANAGE HEART FAILURE THROUGH YOUR DIET

Sodium in canned or processed foods *(goal is < 2,000mg of sodium per day)*

Food	Serving Size	Range of Sodium (mg) Per Serving
 Canned Soup	1 cup	280-980 mg
 Canned Vegetables	½ cup	10-650 mg
 Frozen Cheese Pizza	1 slice (4 ounces)	375-780 mg
 Frozen Meals	6-10 ounces	60-1500 mg
<p>By choosing your frozen meal wisely, you can cut out 1040 mg of sodium. Read labels!</p>		
 Salad Dressing	2 tablespoons	75-620 mg
 Salsa	2 tablespoons	105-250 mg
 Potato Chips	1 ounce	90-380 mg
 Pretzels	1 ounce	75-610 mg

MANAGE HEART FAILURE THROUGH YOUR DIET

How to read a food label

Serving Size/Serving per Package Check the serving size and the number of servings in the package or container. The information on the label only refers to one serving.

Total Fat You need to limit the fat in your diet. *Low fat* is considered to be 3 grams or less of fat per serving.

Saturated Fat Considered the “bad fat,” you should limit this type of fat in your diet. *Low saturated fat* is 1g or less per serving.

Cholesterol Another type of fat you need to limit. *Low cholesterol* is 20mg or less per serving.

Sodium Most people should eat no more than 2,000 mg of sodium per day.

Percent Daily Values are based on daily needs and vary with other medical conditions, such as high cholesterol or heart failure

Nutrition Facts	
Serving Size 1 cup (228g)	
Servings per Package 2	
Amount Per Serving	
Calories 260	Calories from Fat 120
Total Fat 13g 20%	
Saturated Fat 5g 25%	
Cholesterol 30mg 10%	
Sodium 600mg 28%	
Total Carbohydrate 31g 10%	
Dietary Fiber 0g 0%	
Sugars 5g	
Protein 5g	
Vitamin A 4% • Vitamin C 2%	
Calcium 15% • Iron 4%	
Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000calorie diet. Your Daily Values may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs:	
	Calories: 2,000 2,500
Total Fat	Less than 65g 80g
Sat Fat	Less than 20g 25g
Cholesterol	Less than 300mg 300mg
Sodium	Less than 2,400mg 2,400mg
Total Carbohydrate	300g 375g
Dietary Fiber	25g 30g
Calories per gram:	
Fat 9 • Carbohydrate 4 • Protein 4	

Source: National Institutes of Health; National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute

Test Your Label-Reading Skills

- In one cup of the above food, how many grams of **Total Fat** are in a serving?
- How many grams of **Saturated Fat** are in a serving?
- How many milligrams of **Cholesterol** are in a serving?

ANSWERS: 1) 13g, 2) 5g, 3) 30 mg

MANAGE HEART FAILURE THROUGH YOUR DIET

Tips for dining at home

- Cut down on salt gradually, such as over a few weeks or months. You will be surprised how little you miss the salt.
- Snack on fresh fruits and vegetables instead of salty chips and popcorn.
- In recipes, try to cut the salt in half or don't use it at all.
- Be aware that some seasonings like adobo, garlic salt, and lemon-pepper contain salt.
- Read spice labels for salt. Buy the salt-free items.
- Use herbs to create your own salt-free seasoning. Add ¼ teaspoon dried, finely powdered, or ¾ to 1 teaspoon dried, loosely crumbled, or 1½ teaspoons fresh chopped herbs for every four servings of food. one pint of sauce, or one pound of meat.
- Small amounts of herbs and spices should give the flavor you like. Too much may create a bitter or unpleasant taste.
- For foods that cool in less than an hour or for salads, wet the herbs with a little oil or lemon juice and let stand for ½ hour before using to let the full flavor develop.
- For a combination of herbs and spices, use about ½ teaspoon for every four servings.
- Squeeze fresh lemon or lime juice on a dish just before serving to increase the flavor.
- For the best flavor, add seasoning during the last hour of cooking.

Suggested Low-Sodium Seasonings

BEEF Bay leaf, basil, dry mustard, nutmeg, green pepper, sage, onion, marjoram, pepper, thyme, oregano, caraway, curry, garlic, parsley, rosemary

PORK Basil, caraway, cloves, nutmeg, garlic, onion, parsley, rosemary, sage, pepper, applesauce, pineapple, allspice, oregano

FISH Bay leaf, basil, curry, cumin, dry mustard, green pepper, lemon juice, paprika, marjoram, onion, parsley

EGGS Basil, curry, dry mustard, green pepper, onion, paprika, parsley, nutmeg, pepper

CARROTS Parsley, honey, cinnamon, mint, lemon juice, allspice, nutmeg, caraway seed, dill seed, ginger, thyme, pepper

POTATOES Onion, basil, parsley, paprika, bay leaf, green pepper, chives, celery seed, oregano, poppy seed, rosemary, thyme, pepper, garlic, nutmeg

RICE Turmeric, cumin, curry, allspice, honey, onion, green pepper, pepper

BROCCOLI Lemon juice, pepper, vinegar, basil, caraway seed, dry mustard, nutmeg, curry, oregano, garlic

PEAS (GREEN) Onion, basil, mint, sage, pepper, honey, rosemary, parsley, green pepper, oregano, garlic, poppy seed

STRING BEANS Lemon juice, nutmeg, dill seed, thyme, vinegar, dry mustard, oregano, caraway seed, sage, garlic, pepper

SPINACH Lemon juice, vinegar, onion, allspice, basil, oregano, pepper

CORN Green pepper, onion, paprika, pepper, curry

MANAGE HEART FAILURE THROUGH YOUR DIET

Tips for dining at home *Continued*

- One to two teaspoons of sugar can be added to vegetables during cooking. If a sugar substitute is used, add after foods have been cooked; the flavor can change when heated.
- If using a salt substitute, check with your doctor first. Add after foods have been cooked; the flavor changes when heated. "Lite Salt" is still $\frac{1}{2}$ salt and may need to be limited or avoided. Salt Sense[®] is $\frac{1}{3}$ less sodium.
- Many salt substitutes contain potassium. If you are taking potassium or have kidney disease, talk to your doctor before using a salt substitute.

Tips for eating out

- Ask for meals to be prepared without salt.
- Some restaurants, especially chain restaurants, provide nutritional information. Ask for a copy.

What About Alcohol?

Too much alcohol can damage the heart muscle. Ask your doctor if you need to limit alcohol or avoid it completely.



MANAGE HEART FAILURE THROUGH YOUR DIET

In some cases of heart failure, **fluid intake must be limited** to keep the body from holding onto too much fluid. Do this only if your doctor tells you to limit your fluids, and discuss this with your doctor if you have questions or concerns.

What counts as “fluid”?

- All liquids, including those taken with medicines
- Foods that melt at room temperature or melt in your mouth: Jello®, ice cream, ice, popsicles, pudding, sherbet, Italian ice
- Soups, water, and any beverages

Signs of excess fluid include:

- Swelling of hands and feet
- Shortness of breath
- Weight gain of more than 2-3 kilograms (4-7lbs) in a few days
- Feeling of tiredness
- Lightness sensation in the chest
- High blood pressure

Recommended daily fluid allowance

Between 1000-1500 mL **or** 32-48 oz **or** 4-6 cups
(1 cup=8 oz)

Fluid content in commonly consumed beverages/foods

Remember, always read the container to see how much fluid it contains.



Can of soda =
12 oz or 1½ cups



Cup of coffee =
6-8 oz or ¾-1 cup



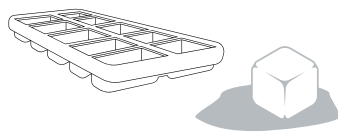
Juice glass =
6 oz or ¾ cup



Water bottle =
16.9 oz or 2 cups



1 cup crushed ice =
4 oz or ½ cup



1 ice cube =
1 oz



1 cup watermelon =
150 mL or 5 oz

MANAGE HEART FAILURE THROUGH YOUR DIET

Ways to control fluid intake and avoid excess weight gain

- Avoid salty foods and foods high in sugar.
- Rinse mouth with refrigerated mouthwash or water. ***Do not swallow!***
- Divide fluid evenly throughout the day. For example, have 1 cup at breakfast, lunch, and dinner, or 1 cup between meals and before bedtime.
- Use sugarless gum and mints.
- Make trays of ice cubes using juices or water.
- Make your own popsicles by measuring out the fluid yourself and freezing it.
- Cold tea, lemonade, and tonic water will quench thirst better than soda.
- Keep busy so you do not think about how thirsty you are.
- Freeze your favorite fruit (grapes, sliced peaches, pineapple chunks, strawberries, applesauce).
- Keep your blood sugar in control if you are diabetic. High blood sugar can make you thirsty.

Tips for staying cool

- Use a mister bottle with fan .
- Stay in the shade if you can. Find a sprinkler or pool
- Wear clothes made of cotton that are light colored and loose fitting.
- Wear a hat.
- Put drinks in a frozen mug.
- Wear a cold bandana.

Taking Steps to Live a Healthier Life

If you smoke—including vaping, e-cigarettes, marijuana—**quitting smoking is the single most important step you can take to improve your overall health.** Quitting reduces your chances of a heart attack and other health problems. If you still smoke, talk to your doctor about quitting.



Nicotine is a highly addictive drug. You may need to try a variety of methods to quit smoking. It may take several attempts before you quit for good. Do not be discouraged if you have been unable to quit in the past. **It is never too late to stop smoking.** Most people have to try more than once before they quit for good.

Products that may help you quit smoking

- Nicotine replacement therapy
- Other medications, such as Bupropion (Zyban®) and Varenicline (Chantix®)

Before taking any medications, including over-the-counter nicotine replacements, discuss them with your doctor.

Support groups

Support groups can help smokers learn how to deal with cravings and withdrawal. The more support you get to, the more likely that you will quit for good.

FREDERICK HEALTH

Free evening, group classes
240-566-3622

FREDERICK COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

Free one-to-one counseling
301-600-1755

MARYLAND TOBACCO QUITLINE

1-800-QUIT-NOW
SmokingStopsHere.com

TAKING STEPS TO LIVE A HEALTHIER LIFE

Preventing respiratory infections

People with heart failure may be more likely to develop respiratory infections.

Tips for preventing respiratory infections:

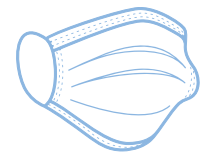
- Wash your hands often. Most germs are spread through hand-to-mouth contact. Wash your hands with soap and warm water. Lather well for at least 15-20 seconds, then rinse well.
- Get a flu shot every year. Be sure to get the vaccine before flu season begins.
- Ask your doctor about getting the pneumonia vaccine.
- Avoid contact with anyone who has signs of a cold or flu.
- Watch for cold or flu symptoms. Call your doctor as soon as you suspect you may be coming down with a cold or flu. Early treatment is key to avoiding complications. Your doctor may prescribe medications to control these symptoms and help you feel better.
- Bathe or shower regularly
- See a dentist yearly



Clean your hands with soap and water or alcohol-based hand sanitizer.



Get regular vaccinations.



Use a face mask to cover your face.

Relaxing your mind and body

Shortness of breath can make you feel anxious and even frightened. There are many relaxation techniques that help you deal with anxiety and breathe more easily. Two examples of relaxation techniques include:

DEEP BREATHING Deep abdominal breathing can help you relax: Breathe in through your nose deeply, pretending to smell your favorite flower. Then, with your lips in a pucker, pretend to blow out the candles on a birthday cake. If you are doing this exercise correctly, your abdomen should be rising and falling.

VISUALIZATION This technique uses your imagination. Close your eyes and imagine a relaxing scene. It may be a beautiful beach or a mountaintop. Picture yourself in this setting. What do you see? What do you hear? What do you smell? Focus on the scene for 10 to 15 minutes.

TAKING STEPS TO LIVE A HEALTHIER LIFE

Staying active...

The heart is a muscle that is strengthened with exercise.

Regular exercise is important in managing your heart failure.

Exercising has many benefits, including:

- Raises energy level
- Controls weight
- Helps blood circulation
- Improves sleep
- Prevents and manages high blood pressure
- Strengthens muscles
- Helps manage stress
- Relieves anxiety and depression

...While saving your energy

With heart failure, you have less energy. Therefore, you need to know how to get things done with as little effort as possible.

Tips to saving energy:

- Do things slowly, while sitting, whenever possible. For example, if you are chopping vegetables, sit at a table instead of standing up in the kitchen.
- Find simple ways to do chores. Keep frequently used items in easy reach. Use a small table or cart on wheels to move things.
- Wear clothes and shoes that can be put on easily. Sit when putting on clothing, socks or shoes.
- Take frequent rest periods, especially between activities, such as eating or bathing.
- Go outdoors when you feel your best. Avoid the outdoors in very high or low temperatures.
- Use a shower chair while taking a shower if possible. A hand-held shower and long-handled sponge may help with bathing.
- Keep mirrors low or use full-length mirrors, so you can sit down while combing your hair or putting on your clothes.

Balancing physical activity with rest is important especially in more advanced stages of heart failure. Aerobic exercise, like walking or swimming is the best type of exercise for your heart. If you are sexually active, ask your doctor if you need to take any special precautions before or during sexual activity.

Signs of overexertion include:

- Chest pain or discomfort
- Aching in your arm, shoulders, neck, jaw or back
- Difficulty breathing
- A racing, pounding, or skipping heartbeat
- Extreme tiredness
- Lightheadedness or dizziness
- Nausea or vomiting

Call your doctor if these symptoms don't go away when you stop activity.

TAKING STEPS TO LIVE A HEALTHIER LIFE

Cardiac Rehabilitation

Frederick Health Cardiac Rehabilitation is an outpatient, hospital-based exercise and education program specifically designed for patients who have experienced a recent cardiac event (including certain heart failure diagnoses). Participants use individualized exercise plans to improve cardiovascular endurance, strength and flexibility. Our professional clinical exercise staff monitors each participant's blood pressure, heart rate and the heart's response to activity. Educational information is also offered with topics such as risk factor reduction for heart disease, eating for a healthier heart, the benefits of exercise and stress management. Most major insurances companies cover Cardiac Rehabilitation services. Frederick Health will verify your insurance coverage prior to starting the program. For more information, please call 240-566-3229.

Chronic Disease Support Management Program (CDSMP)

CDSMP was developed by a team from Stanford University and is offered through Frederick Health. It is a free self-management education workshop attended by people with a variety of chronic health conditions. It aims to build participants' confidence and understanding in managing their health and keep them active and engaged in their lives.

Our workshops meet in community settings such as senior centers, churches and Frederick Health off-campus locations. They benefit adults with chronic health conditions such as heart disease, lung disease, diabetes and other ongoing health problems

The benefits of participation in CDSMP workshops include:

- Decreased pain and health distress
- Decreased depression
- Increased energy and less fatigue
- Better communication with healthcare providers
- Increased physical activity
- Increased confidence in managing chronic health conditions

While Congestive Heart Failure has no cure, managing your symptoms is the key to extending your life.

TAKING STEPS TO LIVE A HEALTHIER LIFE

Advance Care Planning

Advance Care Planning is making decisions about the type of care you would like if you are every unable to speak for yourself. Now is the time to have conversations and complete documents that identify your wishes, values, and beliefs. This caring act will relieve loved ones and healthcare providers of the stress and heartache of guessing what you would want. Documents that you may want to consider completing include the following:

- The **Advance Directive** is a two part legal document in which you can specify what actions should be taken for your health if you are no longer able to make decisions for yourself. It includes two parts: Selection of Healthcare Agent(s) and a Living Will.
- The **MOLST (Medical Orders for Life Sustaining Treatment) form** designates medical orders for current treatment. It is intended to stay with you as you move into and out of various healthcare facilities and treatments.
- **Financial Power of Attorney** designates an agent who will conduct business on your behalf if you should become unable to do so.

Frederick Health offers assistance with Advance Care Planning.

Appointments with licensed social workers are available free of cost to the community. For questions, more information, or to set up a personalized appointment or presentation, please call 240-651-4541 or visit [FrederickHealth.org/ACP](https://www.FrederickHealth.org/ACP).

Other Helpful Resources

Frederick Health Hospital
240-566-3300

Frederick Health Care Clinic
240-360-2574

Frederick Health Medical Group
240-566-3001

Frederick Health Home Care
240-455-3030

To do Every Day...

- Weigh yourself in the morning after you urinate and before you eat or drink anything. Use the same scale and wear the same amount of clothing.
- Write down your weight daily on a calendar.
- Take your medicine as prescribed.
- Check for swelling in your feet, ankles, legs and stomach.
- Eat food low in salt.
- Balance activity and rest periods.



Green Zone

All clear! This Zone is your goal, and your symptoms are under control. You have:

- No increase in shortness of breath.
- No weight gain of more than 3 pounds in a day or 5 pounds in a week.
- No swelling of your feet, ankles, legs or stomach.
- No chest pain.
- Good appetite.



Yellow Zone

Call your doctor

DOCTOR'S NAME

PHONE #

if you:

- Gained more than 3 pounds today.
- Gained more than 5 pounds this week.
- Are more short of breath than usual.
- Have increased swelling of your feet, ankles, legs or stomach.
- Are feeling more tired or have less energy.
- Have a dry hacking cough.
- Feel uneasy; you know something is not right.
- Need to sleep sitting in a chair or it is harder for you to breathe when lying down.



Red Zone

CALL 911 or go to the emergency room immediately if you:

- Are struggling to breathe or have unrelieved shortness of breath while sitting still.
- Have chest pain.
- Are confused or have trouble thinking clearly.
- Feel persistent heart palpitations.
- Are feeling lightheaded.
- Have passed out.