



## General Information

Heart failure means that your heart isn't pumping as well as it should be. Blood can back up into your lungs making it difficult to breathe, and it can also back up into your veins causing swollen legs and feet. Heart failure is a lifelong condition that can't be cured, but there are many treatments that can keep it from getting worse. It is very important that you follow up with your doctor and follow the discharge instructions given to you. Please refer to your discharge instructions for your doctor's name and phone number to make an appointment.

- **Limit Salt Intake:**

Follow the doctor's instructions regarding a low sodium (salt) diet. Too much salt can cause water buildup in your body.

- **Watch Your Weight:**

If you take a water pill (diuretic), it is important to weigh yourself at the same time every day and write it down. Check for swelling in your feet, ankles, legs, fingers, and stomach.

- **Exercise:**

Regular exercise is important to your heart health. Talk with your doctor before starting a physical activity program about what is right for you.

- **Take Your Medications:**

Take medications as ordered to help lessen symptoms such as tiredness, shortness of breath, and swelling.

- **Improve Your Sleep:**

Talk with your doctor about the time you take your medicines, especially your water pill (diuretic). This may save you some trips to the bathroom during the night.

- **Quit Smoking:**

For help, visit [www.smokefree.gov](http://www.smokefree.gov) or call your local quit hotline at 1-800-QUIT-NOW.

**Which zone are you in today?  
Green, Yellow, or Red**

## KNOW YOUR ZONE

Which zone are you in today?

### ALL CLEAR/GOAL ZONE

Your symptoms are under control and you have:

- No shortness of breath
- No weight gain of more than 2 pounds (it may change 1 to 2 pounds some days)
- No chest pain/discomfort
- No swelling in your feet, ankles, legs, fingers, or stomach

### CAUTION/WARNING ZONE

This zone is a warning. Call your doctor if you:

- It is harder to breathe when lying down or are sleeping propped up
- You are feeling more shortness of breath with mild to moderate physical activities or at rest
- You are coughing up pinkish, blood-tinged mucus
- You are having swelling (edema) of your feet, ankles, legs, fingers or stomach. Shoes, pants, or rings are suddenly feeling too tight
- You have gained 3 pounds or more in 1 day or gained 5 pounds or more in 1 week
- You have no energy and are feeling more tired (fatigue)
- You are feeling dizzy/lightheaded or are having trouble thinking clearly
- There are questions or concerns about medications
- You are feeling uneasy and you think something is not right

### EMERGENCY ZONE

Call 911 if you suddenly have any of the following:

- Unrelieved shortness of breath/struggling to breathe at rest: May occur with or without chest/upper body discomfort
- Chest discomfort/pain: May feel heaviness, pressure, squeezing, fullness, or pain. May be felt in one or both arms, back, neck, jaw or stomach
- Heart palpitations: A fluttering or racing heart
- Confusion or dizziness/lightheadedness: Feels like you can't think clearly or might pass out

This could mean your heart failure is getting worse or that you are having a heart attack. Don't wait more than 5 minutes at most to call 9-1-1