

Your Heart Failure Checklist

Here are steps that you can take to best manage your heart failure:



Listen to your body and check for signs that your heart failure might be getting worse:

Use the worksheet [Making the Most of Your Follow-Up Visit](#).

- Swelling in your feet, legs, ankles or stomach
- Sudden weight gain
- Needing to sit in a chair or to prop yourself up with pillows to be able to sleep, breathe more easily
- Feeling winded even with small bouts of activity



Weigh yourself on the same scale every morning before breakfast and write it down in [Your Heart Failure Daily Tracker](#).



Eat foods that are low in salt (sodium) [Quick Tips: Limiting Salt](#)



Know medications are proven to save lives. Be sure to take them as directed, set up reminders and consider using a pillbox to sort medications. Remember that many medications need to be adjusted over time, and sometimes when you're doing and feeling well. Always report any side effects or other concerns, including how to best take multiple medications and the cost. [Quick Tips: Heart Failure Medications](#)



Adopt heart-healthy habits such as getting regular exercise, eating well and getting good nutrition, not smoking, and lowering stress.



Know your heart failure triggers by being familiar with what makes your symptoms worse (for example, periods of stress, eating out, travel, alcohol, not taking medications) Use the worksheet [Making the Most of Your Follow-Up Visits](#).



Accept the need to take breaks more often. Because of the added strain on your heart, you may tire easily after periods of activity, travel, or other daily tasks.



Stay connected to the things you love to do, even if it means you need to participate in a different way or cut back a bit. It's OK if daily tasks seem to take longer.



Manage other conditions that can take a toll on your heart. Talk with your care team if you have feelings of continued sadness or anxiety and trouble sleeping or focusing.



Stay up-to-date with recommended vaccines to prevent illness and avoid complications.



Find your village. It can feel lonely to have heart failure, especially if people around you don't understand it and you appear healthy. Find people who will help to buoy your spirits and support and advocate for you when needed.