

Congestive *Heart* Failure



NORTH MISSISSIPPI
MEDICAL CENTER

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Congestive Heart Failure

Congestive Heart Failure is a condition in which the heart has a hard time pumping the blood through the body. Because of this pumping problem, fluid can build up in the feet, legs, stomach and lungs.

Causes of Congestive Heart Failure:

- Heart attack
- High blood pressure
- Heart valve problems
- Narrowing or blockage of blood vessels
- Defects in the heart present at birth
- Infections of the heart muscle and/or heart valves
- Severe lung disease
- Severe anemia (low blood count)
- Abnormal heart beats

Signs & Symptoms to Report:

- Swelling in feet, ankles and legs
- Stomach swelling, nausea, pain and tenderness
- Weight gain of 2-3 lbs. overnight or 3-5 lbs in one week
- Increased shortness of breath
- Decreased urination
- Increased weakness and feeling tired
- Feeling dizzy or fainting
- Feeling restless or confused
- Irregular (skipping) or increased heart rate
- Dry hacking cough not associated with symptoms of a cold

Know When to Call 911 or an Ambulance:

- Severe trouble breathing or catching your breath
- Chest pain not relieved by three Nitroglycerine tablets

Weigh Yourself Every Day:

- First thing every morning
- After urinating, prior to eating and drinking
- Wear same weight of clothes or without any clothes
- Use same scales placed on the same hard flat surface
- Report 2-3 lbs weight gain overnight or 3-5 lbs over several days to your doctor

Stop Smoking:

Smoking damages your blood vessels, minimizes the amount of oxygen in the blood and makes your heart beat too fast. Ask your physician to recommend a program to help you quit smoking. For a smoking cessation program in your area. Call 1-(800) THE-DESK or 1-(800) 843-3375 for more information.

Heart Failure Medications

Diuretics or “Fluid Pills”:

Bumetanide (Bumex), Furosemide (Lasix), Hydrochlorothiazide (Hydrodiuril), Metolazone (Zaraxylon), Torsemide (Demadex), Amiloride/Hydrochlorothiazide (Moduretic), Triamterene/Hydrochlorothiazide (Dyazide, Maxzide)

- Diuretics help your body get rid of extra salt and water and relieve swelling. Less fluid in your lungs makes breathing easier. Less fluid also means less swelling in other parts of your body. Both of these will help you feel more comfortable.
- Diuretics can deplete your body of potassium. If your blood potassium becomes too low your doctor will prescribe a potassium supplement. Signs of low potassium include leg cramps or weakness. Report these to your doctor.
- It is possible that diuretics can make you dehydrated, especially if you become ill or sweat excessively. If you feel dizzy or develop excessive thirst or dry mouth, contact your doctor.
- It is important that you weigh each day to make sure you are not losing too much fluid.
- If you miss a dose, take it as soon as you remember. If it is time for the next dose, skip the missed dose. Never take a double dose to catch up unless instructed to do so by your doctor.
- Tell your doctor if you develop a rash. Some diuretics may make you more sensitive to sunburn.

ACE Inhibitors/ARBs:

ACE Inhibitors:

Benazepril (Lotensin), Captopril (Capoten), Enalapril (Vasotec), Fisonopril (Monopril), Lisinopril (Zestril/Prinivil), Perincopril (ACEON), Ramipril (Altace), Trandolapril (Mavik), Quinapril (Accupril)

ARBs:

Candasarten (Atacand), Irbesarten (Avapro), Losartan (Cozaar), Telmesartan (Micardis), Valsarten (Diovan)

- These drugs relax blood vessels and make it easier for your heart to pump blood.
- ACE inhibitors and ARBs help heart failure patients live longer and feel better.
- If you are just starting your ACE inhibitor or ARB, it may take a few weeks until you feel better. You may even feel worse for a few weeks until your body adjusts to the medicine.
- If you experience swelling of the face, lips, throat, or tongue: call your doctor immediately.
- If you forget a dose, take it as soon as you remember it, then space the remaining doses for the day evenly. If it is time for the next dose, skip the missed dose. Never take a double dose to catch up.
- You may experience a dry, hacking cough. If it persists or becomes severe, contact your doctor.
- These drugs can reduce your blood pressure and cause dizziness. Call you doctor if you faint or experience excessive dizziness for more than 5-10 minutes after getting up.
- These drugs can also increase your potassium so it is best to avoid potassium supplements, potassium salt substitutes, and potassium-sparing diuretics, unless prescribed by your doctor.

Digoxin:

Digitek, Lanoxin, Lanoxicaps

- Digoxin makes the heart beat stronger and slower. It may help you breath easier and feel better.
- Digoxin is usually taken no more than once daily. Take it at the same time each day.
- If you forget your Digoxin but remember it within about 12 hours, take it. If you remember more than 12 hours after the missed dose skip it and take your next scheduled dose. Never take a double dose to catch up.
- Your doctor may check blood levels to regulate your dose.
- Call you doctor if you experience loss of appetite, nausea, vomiting, irregular heart beats; or visual changes such as seeing halos around lights.
- If you experience any black out spells, call your doctor immediately.
- Never take your digoxin within 2 hours of an antacid.

Beta Blockers:

Carvedilol (Coreg), Metoprolol (Lopressor/Toprol XL)

- Beta blockers have been shown to help people with heart failure live longer and feel better.
- Beta-blockers also control blood pressure, prevent heart attacks, and help regulate heart rhythm.
- You may feel tired for awhile after you first start your beta blocker. Your doctor will start you at a low dose and gradually increase it to help reduce side effects.
- You may have some dizziness for awhile after starting a beta blocker. Taking your beta blocker with food may help stop the dizziness. If it is severe, let your doctor know.
- If you have diabetes, your blood sugar may be affected. Your beta blocker may also block some of the symptoms you typically experience when your blood sugar is too low.
- Be sure and tell your doctor if you have asthma or chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) or have to use an inhaler to help your breathing. If you develop wheezing, get short of breath, or develop a persistent cough after starting a beta-blocker, call your doctor.
- Never abruptly stop taking your beta blocker as this may cause a dangerous increase in your pulse rate.
- Beta-blockers can lower your heart rate or pulse rate. Ask your doctor how often you should have it checked.

Aldosterone Antagonists:

Spironalactone (Aldactone) and Eplerenone (Inspra)

- These are mild fluid pills which has been shown to help heart failure patients live longer and stay out of the hospital.
- They should be taken once daily in the morning, with or without food.
- If you miss a dose and remember within 8 hours, take it. If it is time for the next dose, skip the missed dose. Never take a double dose to catch up.
- These medications can increase your potassium so it is best to avoid potassium supplements, potassium salt substitutes, and potassium-sparing diuretics, unless prescribed by your doctor.
- Call your doctor immediately if you experience irregular heartbeats or muscle weakness or cramps.

Hydralazine and Nitroglycerine or Nitrates:

Hydralazine (Apresoline)

Nitroglycerine Patches, Nitroglycerine Sublingual (Nitrostat), Isosorbide Dinitrate (Isordil), Isosorbide Mononitrate (IMDUR, ISMO, MONOKET)

- These agents relax blood vessels and reduce stress on your heart so it can pump blood more efficiently. They can help you feel better and live longer.
- Take them exactly as prescribed. If you miss a dose, take it as soon as you remember. If it is almost time for the next dose, skip the missed dose and take your regular dose. Never take a double dose to catch up.
- Never crush or chew your nitrate dose.
- The most common side-effect is headache. Tolerance to headache usually occurs with time. If headaches persist or become more severe, contact your physician.
- Call your doctor immediately if you develop severe weakness or fainting or long-lasting severe headache.
- Never take erectile dysfunctional medications such as Viagra or Cialis with nitrates because severe lowering of the blood pressure may occur.

Potassium Chloride:

Micro K, K Dur, Kaon-Cl, K-Lor

- You may need to take potassium to replace what your water pill causes you to lose.
- If taking potassium in tablet or capsule form, swallow your dose whole, do not chew or crush the dose.
- If taking potassium in liquid form, you will need to dilute it in water or juice (about 4 ounces). If you miss a dose, take it as soon as possible. If it is almost time for the next dose, skip the missed dose and take your regularly scheduled dose. Do not take a double dose to catch up.
- Many salt substitutes contain potassium. Talk with your doctor before using a salt substitute.
- Potassium can irritate the stomach. It is best that you take potassium with food or meals.

Statins:

Rosuvastatin (Crestor), Atorvastatin (Lipitor), Fluvastatin (Lescol), Lovastatin (Mevacor), Pravastatin (Pravachol), Simvastatin (Zocor), Simvastatin/Ezetimibe (Vytorin)

- These agents lower your cholesterol. Cholesterol can cause your blood vessels to become clogged which prevents blood from flowing freely. Statins will reduce stress on the heart and help you live longer.
- Take this medicine at night and never take more than your doctor prescribes.
- If you miss a dose, do not take a double dose.
- You may take this medication with or without food but do not take with alcohol, grapefruit or grapefruit juice because they can effect the way these medicines work.
- Let your doctor know if you are taking other medications while taking a statin because one drug may effect the way the other one works.

Statins (continued)

- Do not take while pregnant and use effective birth control.
- Call your doctor if you experience muscle pain, weakness, or cramps; skin rashes or hives; stomach pain, nausea and vomiting, or loss of appetite; unexplained fever; yellowing of skin or eyes.
- It is important to keep all doctor appointments so that your doctor can check your progress regularly.

Community Resources:

Congestive heart failure can be managed with the help of your doctor. However, there are times when you may need additional assistance. Ask your doctor about the following:

- Home Health Care
- Hospice Care
- Outpatient Cardiopulmonary Rehabilitation
- CHF Support Group - Meets at NMMC Education Center on the 4th Thursday of every month. Call 1-800-THE-DESK for more information.

Medication assistance at any of the following:

- Together Rx Access (togetherrxaccess.com) - 1-800-444-4106 - discount card for uninsured patients
- Partnership for Prescription Assistance (pparx.org) - 1-888-477-2669
- Rx Outreach (rxoutreach.com) 1- 800-769-3880 - offers generic medications for \$6 each per month (send 90 day supply for \$18)

Other resources include:

- American Heart Association at www.americanheart.org

Other Special Instructions:

- Always take your medications exactly as instructed.
- Many heart failure medications lower blood pressure and may make you feel lightheaded after getting up.
- Make it a habit to rise slowly from a lying or sitting position.
- Reduce your salt and fluid intake as instructed.
- Nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) can make you retain salt and water which can worsen heart failure. Examples of NSAIDs are Ibuprofen (Advil, Nuprin), Naproxen (Naprosyn, Aleve), Ketoprofen (Orudis KT), Celecoxib (Celebrex), Meloxicam (Mobic), Diclofenac (Cataflam, Voltaren). Avoid taking NSAIDs unless instructed by your doctor. Acetaminophen (Tylenol) may be a better choice for pain or fever.

Contact your physician immediately if you experience any of the following side effects with your medicines:

- Allergic reactions: Hives or skin rash, itching, swelling (especially if it involves the mouth, tongue, lips, throat or joints) fever or chills, difficulty breathing, wheezing, chest tightness.
- Signs of potassium loss: Severe muscle cramps or weakness, particularly in the legs.
- Signs of dehydration: Dry mouth, increased thirst, problems urinating, lightheadedness or fainting, particularly when standing.
- Gastrointestinal problems: Loss of appetite, severe nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, or heartburn, bloody or black stool.
- Heart: Fast or slow heartbeat, irregular (skipping) heart beat or palpitations, sensation of fluttering in the chest, chest pain, pounding heart, sudden loss of consciousness or fainting.
- Eyesight: Loss of vision, blurred vision, yellow haze, yellow circle around lights.
- Other: Severe throbbing headache that persists, numbness, confusion, increased swelling of the feet or ankles, excessive weight gain, any unusual bleeding or bruising, yellowing of the eyes or skin.

Exercising Safely:

Several studies show that mild to moderate exercise is safe for people with congestive heart failure. Exercise may improve how well you feel, physically and mentally. Walking, swimming or cycling at a slow rate may be the best forms of exercise for heart failure patients. Using a stationary bicycle without pressure on the wheels is also a good idea.

Best Forms of Exercising:

- Walking
- Swimming
- Bicycling at a slow rate

Here is a five-step plan to help you exercise safely:

- *Step 1:* Plan to exercise when you are well rested and/or at least 1½ hours after meals. Do not exercise on very cold or hot days unless you can exercise comfortably indoors.
- *Step 2:* Choose a form of exercise you like and plan to do daily. You may want to alternate between two activities to prevent boredom. Walking is an excellent choice because it is safe and easy and requires no special equipment.
- *Step 3:* Begin by walking 5-10 minutes at a time if you have not exercised in the past. If you feel comfortable and are not short of breath or tired, increase your walk by 1-2 minutes every 2-3 days. Soon you may be walking for 15-20 minutes. If you exercise longer than 10 minutes make sure you warm up and cool down by stretching or slow walking.
- *Step 4:* Monitor how you feel during exercise. Are you short of breath or fatigued? Is this changing?
- *Step 5:* If you do not feel well, STOP EXERCISING and call your doctor for advice. Watch out for extreme shortness of breath or chest discomfort.

You should be aware of these symptoms and stop exercising or any activity you are doing IMMEDIATELY:

- If you have shortness of breath or chest pain
- If you are feeling tired
- If you feel dizzy or lightheaded

If you find that you need to rest for an hour or so after exercise it may be another sign that you over did it. Talk to your doctor. He may suggest some medicine to allow you to exercise more.

If your arms need exercise and you are unable to walk, sit in a chair holding one pound weights or cans of soup. Bend your arm and lift weights or cans to your shoulder. Do 8-10 times, repeat one or two more times. Stop the exercise if you feel short of breath or experience chest discomfort.

Sexual Activity:

Heart failure patients often have concerns about sexual activity. In most cases, sexual activity can be continued when your heart failure is controlled with medicine.

Here are some guidelines to help you remain sexually active:

- Make sure you are well rested before you have sex.
- Avoid sex after a heavy meal or alcohol. Choose a position that is comfortable. A side by side position may be less demanding for you.
- If you become short of breath during intercourse, stop, prop yourself up with pillows, or sit up in a chair.
- If you have symptoms during sex such as chest pain or shortness of breath, tell your doctor. Talking it over may help you find solutions to these problems.
- Some patients cannot be sexually active because of their medicines or symptoms. There are other forms of lovemaking, such as hugging and kissing that anyone can do.

If you are concerned about sexual activity, discuss it with your doctor.

Finding the Balance Between Activity and Rest:

Some type of physical exercise every day can make your heart stronger. To feel your best you will need to learn how to balance your need for physical activity and need for extra rest.

Tips for balancing activity and rest:

Take it Slow and Easy:

- Choose lighter activities at first, such as walking.
- Take rest breaks often.
- When you feel stronger, increase your activities.
- It takes time to build up your strength.
- Be patient with yourself.

Pace Yourself:

- Do activities when you are well rested.
- Wait 1½ hours after meals to do activities.
- When you feel stronger, increase your activities.
- It takes time to build up your strength.
- Be patient with yourself.

Finding the Balance Between Activity and Rest: Continued:

Do Not:

- Lift heavy objects (use a wheeled cart or divide into smaller bundles).
- Strain to reach for things (keep items you use within easy reach).

Avoid Strenuous Arm Movements:

- Picking up grandchildren.
- Household chores: vacuuming, mopping floors, washing windows, working in the garden and yard.

Avoid Extreme Temperatures:

- Adjust your activities based on the weather.
- Dress appropriately.
- Hot or cold temperatures place extra stress on the heart.

When to Call a Doctor, 911 or an Ambulance:

- If you become short of breath or have chest pain.
- Feeling like your heart is racing.
- Feeling extremely tired or weak.
- Feeling dizzy or lightheadedness.

If you are concerned about your activities, discuss this with your doctor.

Fluids:

You may have up to _____ cups (or _____ ounces) of fluid per day.

The following foods are counted as fluids (any liquid that you drink, any food that “melts” at room temperature and any food that contains a large amount of liquid):

- Water
- Ice
- Coffee
- Tea
- Milk
- Soft drinks
- Juice and other flavored drinks
- Soup and broth
- Ice cream, popsicles, other frozen desserts
- Gelatin
- Watermelon

Measure Your Fluids Every Day and Keep Track of Them:

Here are two ways for keeping track of fluids (choose one):

1. Write down all the fluid that you eat or drink. Add the amounts so that you can keep a running total. When you reach the amount allowed for the day (see top of this section for the amount), don't drink anymore during that day.

OR

2. Fill a container with the amount of water that you are allowed for the day (see the top of this section for the amount). Use this water with medications or for drinking. When you drink or “eat” any other items from the above list, pour an equal amount of water from the large container into an empty cup, glass or bowl and pour it out. When the container is empty, don't drink anymore during that day.

Tips for Controlling Your Fluids:

- Do not use salt or high sodium foods since they make you thirsty.
- Drink only from a small glass or cup.
- Drain cooked vegetables and canned fruit well.
- Suck on hard candy or chew gum to moisten your mouth.
- Rinse your mouth with water to moisten it, but don't swallow it.

The Following Diet Should be a Part of Your Follow-Up Care:

This diet is strictly for Congestive Heart Failure. If you have other diet needs continue as instructed by your physician.

3 Gram Sodium Diet (3,000 mg sodium)

Too much sodium (salt) in your diet may cause your body to retain water or may increase your blood pressure. So, don't add salt or lite salt to your food when cooking or at the table. Also, a lot of salt is added to mixes and other "processed" foods from the grocery store. It is best to use fresh or no salt added foods whenever you can.

Use the following tips (eat no more than one serving per day of the foods on this list that are marked with an asterisk [*]):

- Salt: Do not use salt or lite salt in cooking or at the table. You may add spices or herbs or seasonings that do not contain salt or sodium. Ask your doctor before using salt substitutes.
- Meats: Select fresh meats and meat substitutes. Canned*, cured*, and smoked* meats, luncheon meats*, tuna*, ham*, breaded* and prepared meats* and cheese* contain lots of sodium and should be included on the one-a-day selection.
- Milk: Limit to 3 cups of milk a day in drinking and cooking. Home-cultured buttermilk may be used in place of regular milk. Commercial buttermilk* is a one-a-day selection.
- Fruit: Eat as desired
- Vegetables: Eat fresh, frozen or canned without salt.
- Soups: Low sodium canned soups or soups made at home with appropriate ingredients.
- Breads: Limit to 6 servings per day - include rolls and crackers with unsalted tops. May have either one small biscuit or one small piece of cornbread (2" square).
- Cereals: Avoid instant cereals. Other cooked cereal or low sodium dry cereal as desired.
- Desserts: Limit to 2 servings per day - ice cream, sherbert, cake, cookies, gelatin.
- Fats: Vegetable oil, soft margarine, low sodium mayonnaise and low sodium salad dressings.
- Condiments: Choose carefully. See following information**.

If you use "processed" foods, read food labels. Choose foods that contain less than 200 mg sodium per serving. Count foods that contain more than 200 mg per serving as a one-a-day item (*).

**Choose only 1 of these foods per day:*

Processed meat (1-2 oz), ham (1 oz), cheese (1 oz), tuna (¼ cup), buttermilk (1 cup), bacon (1 slice), reduced sodium canned soup (1 cup).

***Use only 1 tablespoon of one of these foods per day:*

Ketchup, mayonnaise, salad dressing, steak sauce, Worcestershire sauce, barbecue sauce, peanut butter.

Do Not Eat: Salt pork, bacon fat, salted chips/snacks, salted crackers, pickles, olives, relishes, sauerkraut, sports drinks, seasoning salts, bouillon cubes, cooking wine, instant cereal, instant potatoes, regular canned soups, regular canned vegetables or any vegetable juices, regular or “lite” soy sauce, salt or lite salt

Serving Size Guide

To put your healthy eating plan into action, you need to know what one serving looks like.

| | |
|---|--|
| 3 oz meat, poultry, fish | Deck of playing cards, cassette tape, palm of a woman's hand |
| ½ c fruit, vegetable, cooked cereal, pasta/rice, potatoes | Small fist, a tennis ball |
| 1 pancake or waffle | 4" CD, plastic lid from a one pound coffee can |
| 1 muffin | Large egg |
| 1 medium potato | Computer mouse, bar of soap |
| 4 small cookies | 4 vanilla wafers, 4 casino chips |
| 1 medium orange/apple | Baseball |
| ½ bagel | Hockey puck or width of a large coffee to go lid |
| 1 c chopped fresh leafy greens | 4 lettuce leaves |
| 2 T peanut butter | Golf ball |
| 1 oz cheese | Four dice, tube of lipstick |
| cheese | 3.5" computer disk, one prepacked slice of cheese |

- ½ cup of cooked vegetables equals: 6 asparagus sprouts, 7-8 baby carrots or carrot sticks, 1 ear corn, 3 spears broccoli
- 1 teaspoon butter or margarine = a thumb tip
- 1 tortilla = a small salad 7" salad plate

My CHF Numbers:

New York Heart Class

I II III IV

- I No symptoms and no limitation in ordinary physical activity.
- II Mild symptoms and slight limitation during ordinary activity. Comfortable at rest.
- III Marked limitation in activity due to symptoms, even during less-than-ordinary activity. Comfortable only at rest.
- IV Severe limitations. Experiences symptoms even while at rest.

What is my EF?

EF is called ejection fraction. It is a term your doctor uses to describe the ability of your heart to pump blood effectively. EF can be calculated with different tests. One of the most common tests to determine EF is an echocardiogram (echo). This is a simple test that can be done outpatient or in a doctor's office.

When was my last echo? _____

What was the result? _____

What is my EF? _____

Helpful Hints:

Please bring your yellow CHF book with you to your doctor's appointment. Be sure to ask your doctor or nurse to clarify any questions or concerns you may have.

