

Living well with heart failure – tips for success

Here are some tips to help you manage your heart failure each day.

Family doctor: _____ Phone: _____

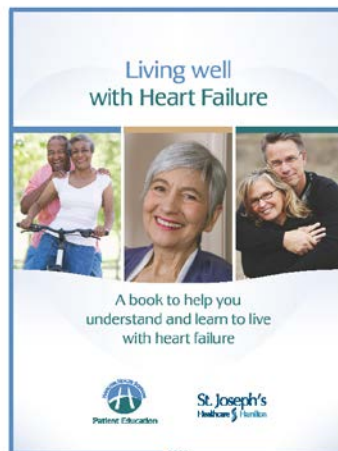
Pharmacy store: _____ Phone: _____

Other: _____ Phone: _____

Other: _____ Phone: _____

For more information, please see the booklet “Living well with Heart Failure: A book to help you understand and learn to live with heart failure”.

Go to the website www.hamiltonhealthsciences.ca, click on the Patient Education tab on the right hand side, and search for this book.



Weigh yourself every morning

If you gain or lose 2 pounds (1 kg) in a day or 5 pounds (2 to 3 kg) in a week, call your health care provider. Your medications may need to be changed.



Know your medications

Take your medications as prescribed, even if you feel well.

Your medications usually help to prevent your heart failure from getting worse. Know the names, amount you take, how often you take it, and the reason for being prescribed each medication.



Always carry a current list of your medications with you wherever you go.

Use the chart included in this handout to list all of your medications. If you need help, talk to your nurse, pharmacist or doctor.



Organize your pills using a pill box.

Talk with your pharmacist about your medications and how to organize them.

Watch your intake of salt/sodium



Take the salt shaker off of the table.

Avoid processed foods such as sausages, pickles, hotdogs, TV dinners and bacon.

Avoid canned foods such as soups and spaghetti sauce.

Drink less fluid

Do not drink more than 2 litres or 6 to 8 cups of fluid in a day.



If you are thirsty suck on a lemon wedge or hard candies or chew gum.

You can also rinse your mouth with ice-cold water but do not swallow the water.

Be active

Stay as active as possible.



Exercise is an excellent way to manage your heart failure. It is important to exercise regularly, but you need to pace yourself. Balance periods of rest with periods of activity.

Walk on level surfaces and avoid hills. Walk indoors when it is too hot, humid or cold outside. Do not walk if you are unusually tired or ill.

Call your health care provider within 24 hours if you:



- gain or lose 2 pounds (1 kg) in a day.
- gain or lose 5 pounds (2 to 3 kg) in a week.
- have more shortness of breath with your usual activities or new shortness of breath while resting.
- find it harder to breathe when you are lying down.
- find it easier to sleep by adding pillows or sitting up in chair.
- lose your appetite, feel bloated or full in your abdomen (belly).
- have nausea, vomiting or diarrhea for more than one day.
- feel more tired or weak.

Call 911 right away if you:

- are struggling to breathe.
- have severe shortness of breath that will not go away.
- have chest discomfort or pain that lasts for more than 15 minutes and is not relieved by rest or nitroglycerin.
- have fast or irregular heart beats or a “racing heart” that makes you feel dizzy or unwell.
- have fainted.
- are coughing up frothy or pink sputum.



My Medications

Name: _____

Date: _____

Below is a list of **all the medications you take**. If you have any questions about your medications, talk to your nurse, pharmacist or doctor.

Medication Name	Strength (milligrams)	Reason I take	Directions	Morning	Afternoon	Evening	Bedtime

Always carry a current list of your medications with you wherever you go.

please turn over →

Date	Medication Change

Medication Allergies