



CONGESTIVE HEART FAILURE: HOME TREATMENT PLAN

- 1. DAILY WEIGHT:** Weigh yourself every morning at the same time on the same scale. Keep a daily record of your weights. Notify your doctor if you gain 2 pounds or more overnight or 5 pounds in a week.
- 2. DIET:** Sodium (salt) is limited in your diet because it will make the body hold fluid. The excess fluid makes the heart work harder to pump blood. You will be given a low salt diet plan to follow. If you have any questions, ask your nurse or dietitian.
- 3. MEDICINES:** Know the names of your medicines, what they are used for, their side effects, the prescribed doses and the times that you take them. Plan ahead so you do not run out of your medicines. Bring your medicines with you to **each** clinic appointment so the doctor will know exactly what you are taking. Check with your doctor before taking any over the counter medicines for arthritis or pain because some of these medicines can cause you to hold fluid.
- 4. REST:** Plan rest periods throughout the day. This allows your heart to rest and allows you time to recover from activity.
- 5. DO NOT SMOKE:** Smoking narrows blood vessels, reduces the amount of oxygen in your blood and makes your heart beat faster. All this can make breathing more difficult.
- 6. AVOID OR LIMIT ALCOHOL:** Alcohol depresses the pumping function of your heart and should be avoided or greatly limited. Ask your doctor which would be best for you.
- 7. EXERCISE:** A gradual increase in exercise is usually recommended. Avoid exercises that put sudden demands on the heart. Stop and rest if you

feel tired or short of breath. Know your limits and do not push yourself. Ask your doctor for more instructions on how much you should exercise.

8. AVOID TEMPERATURE EXTREMES: The heart works harder to keep the body temperature normal when you are too hot or too cold.

9. CALL YOUR DOCTOR IF:

- You gain 2 pounds or more overnight or 5 pounds in a week
- Your ankles or feet swell more than usual
- You start coughing at night or have frequent dry coughing
- Your breathing becomes more difficult
- You have a "black-out" spell

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