

Living well with Heart Failure



A book to help you
understand and learn to live
with heart failure



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In this book we have used the term “health care provider”.

Your health care provider is the person who looks after your heart failure.
This may include a doctor or advanced practice nurse.

Introduction

Learning that you or your loved one has heart failure can be a difficult time. You may have many questions about your condition or your treatment.

Heart failure is a serious condition and it can range from mild to severe. Life long treatment is usually needed.

There are a number of treatments that can help your heart work better and help you to feel better too. Your symptoms of heart failure can improve with a combination of medications, a balance of rest and exercise and healthy food choices.

This book has information to help you, your family and friends:

- understand heart failure
- learn how to live with heart failure
- know when and how to get help

There is a lot of information in this book and there will be some information you do not need right now. Take your time reading the sections that are important for you to know.



Keep this book and refer to it any time you want to look up information or have a question. Let members of your family and friends read it too.

We hope this book helps you take part in your own care and well being.

This book supports information that members of the health care team tell you. Health care information changes quickly.

If you have any questions, talk to a member of your health care team.

Understanding heart failure

What is heart failure?

With heart failure or HF, your heart is not able to pump enough blood that is needed by your body. Heart failure does not mean your heart has stopped beating.

Heart failure may also be called congestive heart failure or CHF.

What causes heart failure?

Heart failure can be caused by:

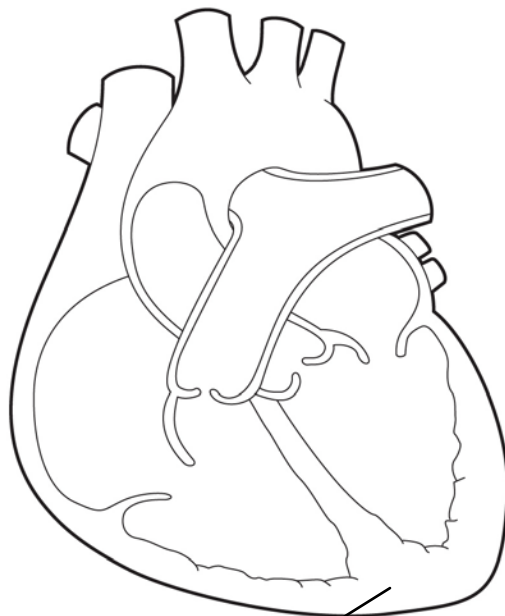
- heart attack
- coronary artery disease
- high blood pressure
- heart valve problems
- heart muscle infection (virus)
- alcohol and drug abuse
- some types of chemotherapy
- genetics

Sometimes, the cause is not known.

What happens in heart failure?

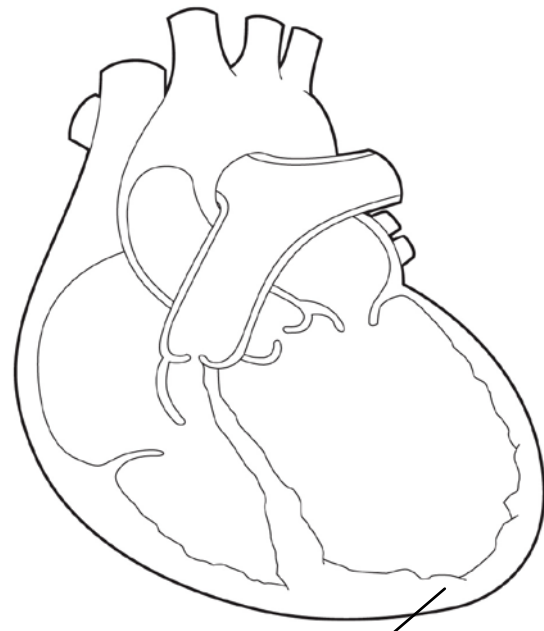
A normal heart muscle is strong and flexible. Heart failure usually happens when the heart muscle is either weak or stiff.

Normal heart



Flexible strong heart muscle

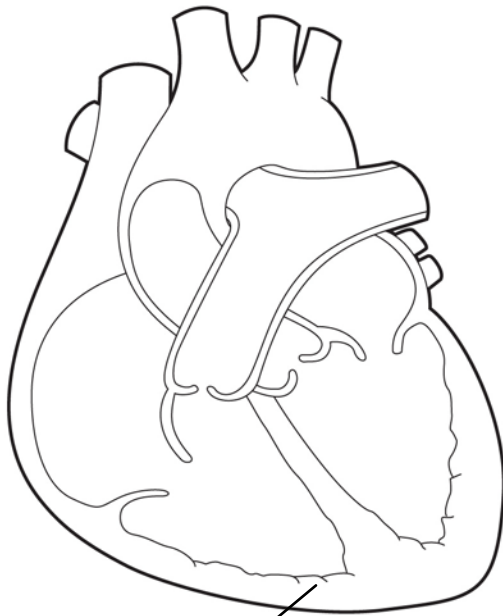
Weak heart



Thin weak heart muscle

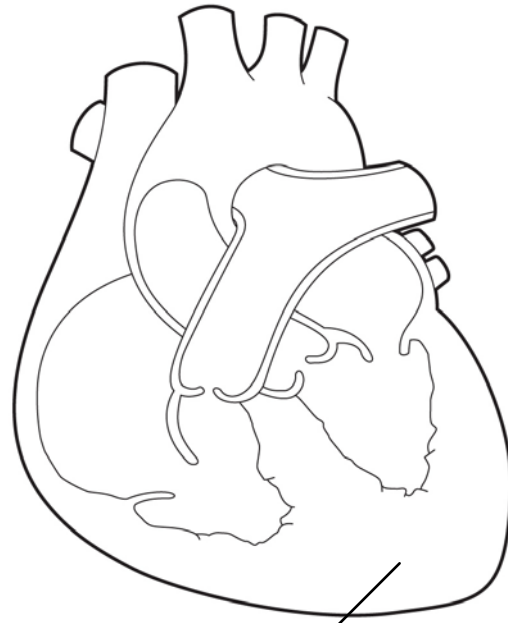
A stiff heart muscle is when the heart cannot stretch to fill with enough blood in between each heartbeat.

Normal heart



Flexible strong heart muscle

Stiff heart



Thick stiff heart muscle

At first your body will try to adapt to your heart's pumping problems. However, these changes can only work for a short time. In the long-term these changes can make your heart failure worse.

What are the symptoms of heart failure?

With heart failure, you may feel tired or have trouble breathing.

Sometimes blood can back up while waiting to enter your heart. This build up of blood causes fluid to leak out of your blood vessels and causes congestion in your lungs, swelling in your body or both. Usually swelling happens in your feet, legs and waist.

You are the expert on how you feel. Take time each day to notice whether your symptoms are stable or getting worse.

What symptoms do I watch for each day?

- swelling in your feet, legs or waist
- gaining or losing weight
- stomach feels bloated or full
- little or no appetite
- changes in your breathing



Use the Weight Diary on page 53 to keep track of your weight and symptoms.

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.

Symptoms I get when my heart failure is getting worse:

Noticing changes early and reporting them to your health care provider can prevent serious problems such as going to the hospital.

Do not wait until you are feeling unwell to call your health care provider.

Call 911 or your local emergency number right away if you have:

- 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 pink sputum.




What to do if you have chest pain or discomfort:

1	Rest	Stop what you are doing right away. Sit or lie down. This will decrease the work of the heart.
2	Relax	Take slow, deep breaths.
3	Take nitroglycerin	Take your nitroglycerin as prescribed: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• take your 1st dose of nitroglycerin. Spray or place tablet under your tongue.• if the chest pain does not go away after 5 minutes, take a 2nd dose.• if the chest pain is still there after 5 or more minutes (now a total of 10 minutes), take a 3rd dose.
4	Get help	If you still have chest pain or discomfort after taking 3 nitroglycerins at 5 minutes apart: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• call 911 or your local emergency number for an ambulance right away.• do not drive yourself to the hospital.


Drink less fluid

- Do not drink more than 1 ½ to 2 litres or 6 to 8 cups of fluid a day.

What can I do if I am thirsty?

- Avoid using salt and salty foods. This will help to reduce thirst.
- Brush your teeth or rinse your mouth with chilled mouthwash.
- Swallow medications with soft foods such as applesauce and save fluid for when you are thirsty.
- Suck on a lemon wedge or use lemon in water. The sour taste will help quench thirst. 
- Rinse your mouth with ice-cold water. **Do not swallow the water.**
- Chew gum or suck on hard sour candies. This will help make saliva in your mouth.
- Freeze 1 cup or 250 ml of water to make 8 ice cubes. Cold things quench thirst better than ones at room temperature.

Other tips to help you manage heart failure

- Avoid drinking alcohol. 
- Stop smoking.
- Do not cross your legs.
- Do not wear tight knee high stockings or socks. Special elastic stockings may reduce swelling in your legs. Talk to your health care provider about wearing these stockings.
- Get a flu shot every year.

Medications

You may be given different types of medications for heart failure that:

- help your heart pump stronger
- make it easier for your heart to pump blood through your body
- get rid of extra water from your body
- replace potassium

The number of medications and their strengths may need to be changed often depending on:

- how you feel
- whether you have a stiff or a weak heart
- how you tolerate each medication (side-effects)

Some medications are started at a very small strength so your body can adjust to the new medication. The strength may be slowly increased over weeks or months until you are taking full strength.

Your medications usually help to prevent your heart failure from getting worse. Most people need to have blood tests done regularly to monitor for side effects. You will need to take some medications for the rest of your life.

Common medications you may be prescribed

Beta blocker

A beta blocker causes your heart to beat slower. This allows the heart more time to fill with blood. A beta blocker may also help your heart muscle get stronger after you have been taking this medication for a few months. When this happens you are less likely to have fluid build up in your body from heart failure.

Examples of beta-blockers are:

- bisoprolol
- carvedilol
- metoprolol

Medications to relax your blood vessels

A blood vessel is like a garden hose. The wider the hose, the more fluid will flow. These medications relax your blood vessels which opens them up and makes them wider. This allows your heart to pump blood out to the blood vessels more easily. Blood also flows into the heart much easier. This helps your heart work much better.

Examples of these medications are:

- ACEI – which means Angiotensin Converting Enzyme Inhibitor such as ramipril (Altace[®]), enalapril (Vasotec[®]) or perindopril (Coversyl[®])
- ARB – which means Angiotensin Receptor Blocker such as candesartan (Atacand[®])
- hydralazine (Apresoline[®])
- Nitrates such as nitroglycerine patches and isosorbide (Isordil[®])

Digoxin

Digoxin causes your heart to beat slower and stronger. This can help you feel better.

Water pills (diuretics)

You may be given water pills also known as diuretics. In heart failure your kidneys try to adapt to your heart's pumping problems by saving water and making less urine. All of this saved water can collect in the lungs and the rest of your body. Diuretics help your body get rid of water by making more urine. You may also lose potassium in the urine.

Examples of diuretics are:

- bumetanide (Burinex[®])
- furosemide (Lasix[®])
- metolazone (Zaroxolyn[®])

Spironolactone or Eplerenone

Spironolactone or Eplerenone help prevent the kidneys from saving extra water. It is not a water pill that makes you run to the bathroom. It also helps your body save potassium.

Potassium

As your body gets rid of extra water, you may also lose potassium in your urine. Your body needs potassium for your heart, kidneys, muscles, nerves and digestive system to work well. You get potassium from eating a variety of healthy foods. Sometimes you need extra potassium in pill or liquid form.

Examples of potassium are:

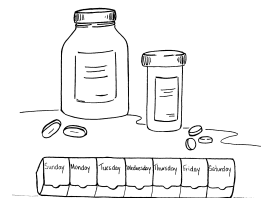
- Micro K
- Slow K

What are the common adverse or side effects of these medications?

Each medication has its own adverse or side effects. Talk to your health care provider or pharmacist about your medications. Read the information handouts from the hospital or pharmacy for more information. These handouts give you information about the adverse effects. You need to make a plan with your health care provider about when you should call him or her or go to the hospital.

Tips for taking medication

- Use a pill organizer or blister pack (prepared at your pharmacy) to help you remember to take your medication.
- Know the names of your medications, how much to take, and when you need to take them.



- **Bring your medications in their original containers** from the pharmacy with you to all of your medical appointments.
- Carry an updated list of your medications with you at all times.
- Take your medication exactly as directed.
- Take your medication with a meal or right after a meal.

Talk to your health care provider or pharmacist if you have any questions about your medication.

What do I need to know about my medications before I leave the hospital?

You and your family members need to know:

- the correct name and dose of your medications
- why you need to take these medications
- how long you need to take these medications
- when and how to refill your prescription
- which medications have been stopped or changed, or any new medications you take
- how to take your medications correctly
- where to keep your medications
- the possible side effects of your medications



Your health care provider and pharmacist can help you learn this information about your medications while you are in the hospital. Your community pharmacist can also review this information with you each time you refill your prescription.

Get rid of any medications you no longer use. Take your unused medications to your pharmacy for environmentally safe disposal. Do not throw medication in the garbage, down the sink or toilet.

Exercise at home

Exercise is an excellent way to help manage your heart failure. However, when you have heart failure, sometimes exercise can be difficult. You may feel tired or short of breath. Just do as much as you feel you can do. It is important to exercise regularly, but you need to pace yourself.

Why do we keep encouraging you to exercise?

Exercise will help the muscles in your body get stronger so that your heart will not have to work as hard when you do an activity. With regular exercise, such as walking, you may breathe easier and have more energy.

Before you start an exercise program, talk to your doctor, nurse, physiotherapist or kinesiologist about what exercises or activities you may be thinking of doing. Ask whether your medications will have an effect on your exercise.

This section gives you tips on how to start an exercise program at home and helps to answer these questions:

- How often should I exercise each week?
- How much exercise can I do each day?
- How do I tell if I am exercising at the right level?
- What kinds of exercise can I do?
- How do I know if I have done too much?

You may also be eligible for a cardiac rehabilitation program where you will learn how to exercise safely.

How often should I exercise each week?

Try to exercise 4 to 7 times a week. There may be days when you feel very tired or not well enough to exercise. It is okay to not exercise on these days.

How much exercise can I do each day?

Start by trying to exercise a total of 10 to 15 minutes of exercise a day. Gradually work your way up to a total of 30 minutes once you feel stronger.

You may have to pace yourself. For example:

- Do 2 or 3 sets of 5 minutes each for a total of 15 minutes.
- Do 3 sets of 10 minutes each for a total of 30 minutes.

Remember to take rests when needed.

How do I tell if I am exercising at the right level?

The Rate of Perceived Exertion or RPE Scale (see page 15) is used to measure how easy or hard you find an activity. The numbers on the scale describe how easy or hard an activity feels to you.

The scale has numbers from 0 to 10. For example, 0 (nothing at all) would be how you feel when you are resting in a chair; 8 to 10 would be how you feel when you have finished an exercise stress test.

Try to reach level 3 to 5 on the RPE Scale when you exercise.

When you use this scale, include any symptoms such as shortness of breath and how tired you feel in your legs and body.

The Rate of Perceived Exertion (RPE) Scale

0 Nothing at all, very easy

1 Very slight

2 Slight

3 Moderate

4 Somewhat hard

5 Hard

6

7 Very hard

8

9 Very, very hard (almost maximal)

10 Maximal

It is important to listen to your body, and work at your own pace.

What kinds of exercise can I do?

You should do both aerobic and strength training exercises.

Aerobic exercises

Aerobic exercises include activities like walking and cycling.



Strength training or resistance exercises

Strength training or resistance exercises include activities like lifting light weights and stair stepping.



Aerobic and strength training exercises will help make your muscles work better. This will take some of the work away from your heart.

See pages 20 to 23 for more information and examples of aerobic and strength training exercises you can do at home.

When will I notice a difference?

It usually takes at least 6 to 8 weeks to notice the benefits of exercise. It is normal to feel discouraged at times. Try and stick with it and exercise as regularly as you can. Exercise is one of the best things you can do for your heart. Talk with your doctor, nurse, physiotherapist or kinesiologist if you have any questions.

How do I know if I have done too much?

Slow down if:

- you rate your exercise intensity at 6 or more on the RPE scale (see page 15)
- you cannot talk while exercising
- you have new muscle or joint pain lasting more than 3 days
- you are not able to do your normal daily activities following an exercise session

When should I stop an exercise or activity?

Your body should let you know when you need to slow down or stop.

Stop what you are doing if you have:

- dizziness or a faint feeling
- palpitations or unusual heart beats
- a racing heart
- trouble breathing to the point where you cannot talk
- nausea
- angina
- any other symptoms that make you feel worried

If your symptoms are severe and do not go away within 15 minutes of rest, call 911 or an operator for an ambulance.

What do I do if I feel too tired to exercise?

There may be times when you do not feel up to exercising or need to decrease the amount of time you exercise because of other reasons.

Decrease your regular exercise or activities in half when:

- you feel more tired than usual
- you have other activities planned that may make you feel tired such as family gatherings or social events
- your weight has increased and you need to take extra water pills
- you have another health problem such as a cold or infection
- you have missed your regular exercises for 5 to 7 days – for example, due to bad weather

If you still feel extra tired after doing only half of your regular exercises, talk with your doctor, nurse, physiotherapist or kinesiologist.

Are there any activities I should not do?

Do not do these activities until you have cleared them with your doctor:

- Do not lift, carry, push or pull anything over 4.5 kilograms or 10 pounds. This includes children, pets, groceries, laundry and weights.
- If you have to hold your breath to lift something – it is too heavy for you.
- Do not shovel.
- Avoid activities where your arms are kept over your head such as washing windows, painting and hanging decorations. Use long handed tools to make reaching easier.
- Do not go into a sauna or hot tub. These activities are not recommended for people with heart problems due to extreme heat.
- Avoid straining or holding your breath such as when straining on the toilet or trying to open a window that is stuck.

What happens if I do not exercise?

If you do not do regular exercise, the muscles in your body will get weaker over time. This will make you feel even more tired, short of breath or both. It will also put more stress on your heart.

Here are some helpful hints for exercise:

- Plan to exercise at a time when you feel rested, such as after a nap.
- Schedule exercise time into your daily routine. Exercising at the same time every day may help.
- Stick with it. If you exercise daily, it will soon become a healthy habit. It often takes only 21 days to start a habit.
- Even starting off with a very small amount of exercise is good. Use the **Exercise Record** (see page 24) to help you keep track of your progress.
- Wear loose, comfortable clothing and comfortable shoes.
- Always start with a 5 to 10 minute warm up to slowly increase your heart rate and stretch your muscles before exercise.
- Walk on a flat surface. Avoid steep hills.
- When drinking liquids during exercise, remember to keep within your fluid restriction.
- Try different exercises so that you do not get bored.
- Pace yourself and balance your activities with rest.
- Never exercise on a full stomach. Wait at least 1½ hours after a large meal.
- Avoid exercising outside in very hot or very cold temperatures.
- Avoid windy humid weather.
- If you become too tired or very short of breath with exercise, do not go to bed for a nap. It is much better for you to rest by sitting in a comfortable chair.
- Include a 5 to 10 minute cool down period at the end of your exercise session.

Exercises

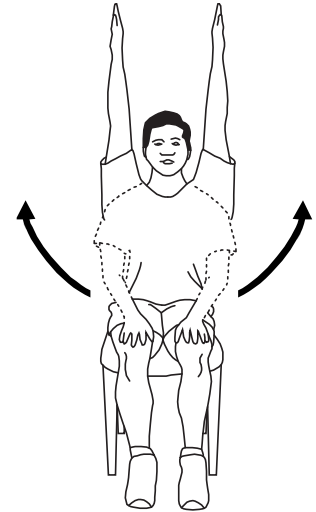
When you exercise, continue to breathe normally. Holding your breath while doing any physical activity can raise your blood pressure and heart rate too quickly. This will put too much stress on your heart and you may feel unwell.

If you have any unusual joint or muscle pain, stop the exercise causing pain. Talk to your doctor, nurse, physiotherapist or kinesiologist before starting this exercise again.

You may do these exercises at home to get started:

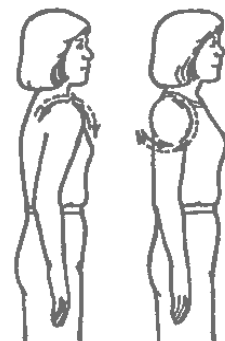
Exercise #1 – Deep breathing

Sit or stand with your arms at your side. Take a deep breath in and bring your arms over your head. As you breathe out, bring your arms back to your sides. Repeat 3 to 5 times.



Exercise #2 – Shoulder circles

Sit or stand with good posture. Slowly rotate shoulders backward. Then rotate shoulders forward. Repeat 5 times each way.



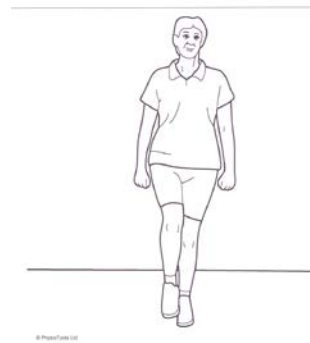
Exercise #3 – Arm circles

Slowly make large circles with your arms. Repeat 5 times forward and 5 times backwards with each arm.



Exercise #4 – March on the spot

With arms at your side, slowly march on the spot for 3 to 5 minutes.



Exercise #5 – Hamstring stretch

To stretch the back of your thigh, sit in a chair with one leg straight in front, heel on the floor. Lean your body forward, sit tall with your head up. Hold the stretch for 20 seconds. Repeat 3 times on each leg. Keep breathing easily.



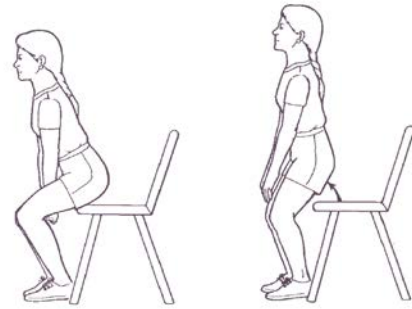
Exercise #6 – Sitting knee extension

Sit on the edge of a bed or chair. Straighten right knee fully. Hold for 5 seconds. Slowly lower to starting position. Repeat 5 to 10 times on each leg.



Exercise #7 – Sit to stand

Sitting with your arms at your side, stand up and then sit down slowly on a chair. Repeat 5 to 10 times.



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Exercise #8 – Step ups

Stand in front of an 8" step. Step up 5 to 10 times with one leg leading. Repeat with the other leg leading.



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Exercise #9 – Calf raises

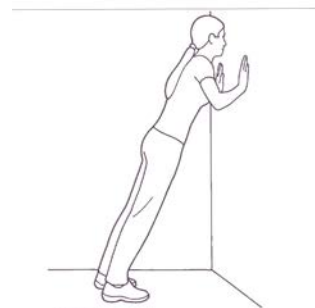
Stand with your hands on the back of a chair for support. Push up on your toes. Repeat 5 to 10 times.



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Exercise #10 – Wall push-ups

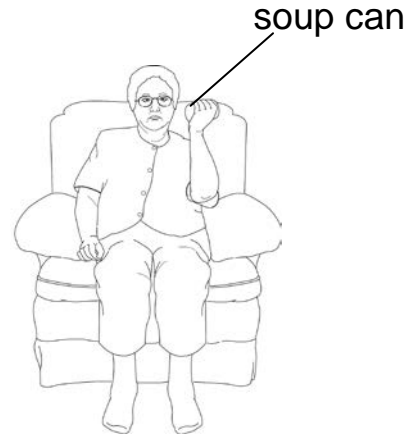
Stand facing a wall with your arms straight and hands on the wall. Slowly bend your elbows, bringing your face and chest towards the wall, then push away from the wall back to your restarting position. Repeat 5 to 10 times.



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Exercise #11 – Bicep curls

Start by using a weight of 1 to 2 pounds (½ to 1 kg), such as a soup can, when you first begin your program. Using one arm at a time, keep your palm upward and your elbow at your side. Hold the weight in your hand and slowly bend your elbow, bringing your hand toward the ceiling. Slowly return. Repeat 5 to 10 times on each arm.



Pictures for exercises 2 to 10 are used with permission from The Saunders Group Inc.

Cool down

Always cool down by doing some very slow walking or easy marching on the spot for 5 to 10 minutes. Include some deep breathing and arm circles.

Tips to help you start walking ...

- Wear proper walking shoes to avoid muscle and joint problems.
- Start by walking the distance you walked in the hospital.
- Plan your walks and start off slowly – even if you can only walk for 2 to 5 minutes at a time. Often people find it easier to do a few short walks in a day rather than taking one long walk.
- Gradually increase the amount of walking you do.
- Walk with someone the first few times. This will make you and your family feel more confident. It is always a good practice to exercise with someone.
- A shopping mall is a good place to walk. It is climate controlled and the surface is flat. There are often benches along the way to rest.
- A good rule to remember is " Walk so you can talk". If talking is hard to do, then you need to slow down or rest.

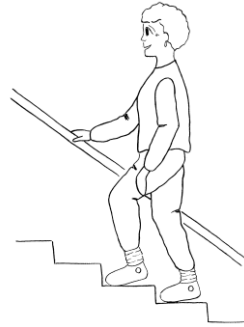
Exercise Record

Date	How far I walked (minutes)	Time of Day	RPE Scale 0 to 10	How I felt
<i>May 22</i>	<i>5 minutes</i>	<i>12 pm</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>Good</i>

Save your energy

The activities you do every day use energy. Examples are:

- climbing stairs
- housework such as preparing meals and doing dishes
- personal care such as bathing and dressing



Tips to save your energy when you go home:

✓ **Plan ahead**

Learn to plan your exercise and your activities. Ask questions such as “Does this task really need to be done?” and “Does it need to be done by me?” Plan to do your activities at a time when you feel rested.

✓ **Pace yourself**

Do only what you really need to do and rest between activities.
Stop before you are too tired!

✓ **Do not lift**

Do not lift, push or pull more than 10 pounds or 4.5 kilograms. Divide laundry, garbage and groceries into smaller piles. Use a wagon or cart. Slide rather than lift an object.

✓ **Avoid bending and reaching**

Long-handled tools make reaching easier. Keep things you use the most often within easy reach.

✓ **Sit down when you can**

Sit down when dressing, sorting laundry and preparing meals. You can sit on a tub chair in the shower.

✓ **Use good posture**

Use a chair with good back support. A footstool helps prevent pressure on the back of your legs.

✓ **Avoid straining or holding your breath**

This includes straining on the toilet, lifting heavy objects and trying to open stuck windows.

✓ **Avoid temperatures that are too hot or too cold**

Avoid exercising if it is too hot, too humid or too cold outside. Use warm water for showering.

✓ **Limit visitors**

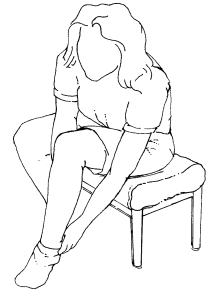
Rest is an important part of your recovery. Too many visitors or phone calls can be very tiring for you and can get in the way of your recovery. Limit your company to 2 short visits a day.

Although your family and friends care about you and want to see how you are doing, you may need to limit visiting times. Do not be afraid to tell your company that you need your rest as part of your recovery and excuse yourself from the room when you feel tired and need to rest.

Ways you can save your energy

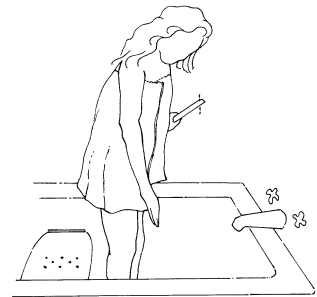
Dressing:

- sit when dressing
- have your clothes within arms reach
- wear loose-fitting clothing as it is easier to put on and take off
- dress the lower part of your body first as this takes up the most energy
- avoid bending



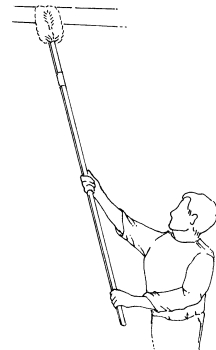
Grooming and bathing:

- sit on a stool or chair while washing, shaving or putting on make-up
- use a bath chair and hand-held shower to avoid standing
- use a long-handled sponge to clean yourself
- wear a long terrycloth housecoat to help dry off after bathing



Cleaning:

- clean one room at a time – if cleaning the whole house, spread the job over a number of days
- use long-handled broom and dust pans to avoid bending
- have someone clean and vacuum for you



Kitchen work:

- store items used most often in the easiest place to reach
- sit to prepare food
- organize your work ahead of time
- prepare extra at meals and freeze for future use
- air dry dishes



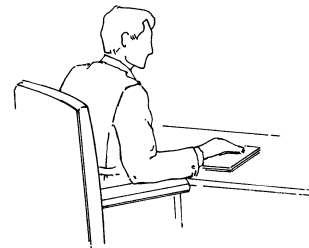
Shopping:

- use a delivery service to your home where possible
- use a cart to move shopping bags rather than carry them
- if you need to carry shopping bags, divide into smaller loads and hold them close to your body



Working at a desk:

- remember that posture is very important
- organize your work space to avoid bending and reaching
- take frequent stretch breaks



Yard work:

- do a little bit at a time
- avoid using your arms over and over such as raking, hoeing or weeding
- have someone help you with heavier jobs



Eating less salt or sodium

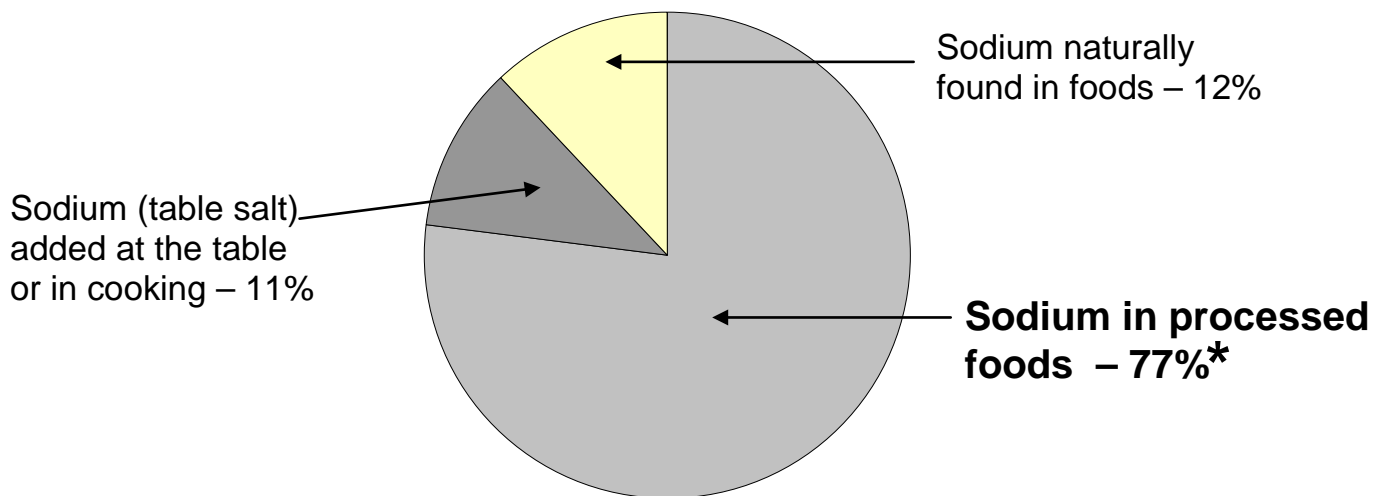
Why do I need to eat less salt or sodium?

Eating too much salt or sodium causes fluid to build up in your legs and the rest of your body. It also causes high blood pressure. It is very important to limit the amount of salt or sodium in your diet.

What is the difference between salt and sodium?

Table salt contains a mineral called sodium. It is a source of sodium in our diet.

Sources of sodium in our diet



Source: Journal of the American College of Nutrition, 1991

- * Most of the sodium in our diet comes from processed foods. Some foods may be high in sodium and not even taste “salty”.

Ways to reduce salt or sodium include:

- ✓ Eat fewer processed or convenience foods that are high in salt or sodium:
 - canned soup
 - spaghetti or tomato sauce
 - processed cheese
 - soy sauce
 - pickles and pickled products
 - frozen meals

- ✓ Eat less cured and processed meats:
 - sausage
 - bacon
 - hot dogs
 - deli meats or cold cuts such as bologna, turkey breast, salami or ham

- ✓ Take the salt shaker off the table.
Try seasoning your foods with herbs, spices and lemon or lime juice instead.

- ✓ Do not use table salt or sea salt in cooking or baking.

- ✓ Replace onion, garlic and celery salt with the fresh product or powder.

- ✓ Have restaurant or take out foods less often.



Read the food label

Read the food label to help you choose healthier foods.

1. Read the Nutrition Facts table.
2. Look at the serving size at the top. Compare this amount to the amount that you eat.
3. Look at the milligrams of sodium. Choose foods with less sodium.

**Campbell's Chunky
Savory Vegetable Soup**

Soup #1

Nutrition Facts	
Per 250 mL (1cup)	
Amount	% Daily Value
Calories 110	
Fat 1 g	2%
Saturated 0.5 g	
+ Trans 0 g	3%
Cholesterol 10 mg	
Sodium 770 mg	29%
Carbohydrate 22 g	7%
Fibre 4 g	16%
Sugars 6 g	
Protein 3 g	

**Campbell's Healthy
Request Vegetable Soup**

Soup #2

Nutrition Facts	
Per 250 mL (1 cup)	
Amount	% Daily Value
Calories 120	
Fat 1.0 g	1%
Saturated 0.5 g	
+ Trans 0 g	3%
Cholesterol 0 mg	
Sodium 410 mg	17%
Carbohydrate 24 g	8%
Fibre 4 g	16%
Sugars 8 g	
Protein 3 g	

**Health Valley Organic
Vegetable Soup, No Salt
Added**

Soup #3

Nutrition Facts	
Per 250 mL (1 cup)	
Amount	% Daily Value
Calories 110	
Fat 2.5 g	4%
Saturated 0 g	
+ Trans 0 g	0%
Cholesterol 0 mg	
Sodium 75 mg	3%
Carbohydrate 17 g	5%
Fibre 3 g	12%
Sugars 4 g	
Protein 3 g	

Soup #3 has the least amount of sodium (milligram or mg) for each 1 cup (250 ml) serving.

Nutrition Claim

A Nutrition Claim is used to highlight a key nutrition feature of a food product. It is often put on the front of a package in big, bold type. Here are some claims that can be made in Canada about salt and sodium.

What the label says	What it means
Sodium-free/Salt-free	Less than 5 mg sodium for each serving listed on the package.
Low-sodium	Not more than 140 mg sodium or less for each serving listed on the package.
Reduced-sodium	At least 25% less sodium when compared to the regular product.
Unsalted or No added salt	No salt or sodium is added to the food during processing.

If a product has “sodium or salt-free” or “low-sodium” on the label, it is OK to eat as long as you eat the recommended serving size.



Be careful. Products that have “reduced-sodium”, “unsalted” or “no added salt” on the label can still have too much sodium. You will still need to read the Nutrition Facts table on the label.

How can I improve the flavour of food without adding salt?

Using herbs, spices and other products in your cooking is the answer to improving the natural flavours in food without adding salt.

Meat

Beef	bay leaf, chives, parsley, dry mustard powder, marjoram, thyme, oregano, pepper, garlic, onion, fresh mushrooms, sage, nutmeg
Chicken	green pepper, fresh mushrooms, parsley, chives, poultry seasoning, lemon juice, paprika, sage, thyme, pepper
Pork	applesauce, garlic, onion, pepper, cloves, dill, parsley, sage
Veal	apricot, bay leaf, curry powder, ginger, marjoram, oregano
Lamb	applesauce, garlic, onion, pepper, cloves, dill, parsley, sage
Fish	lemon juice, bay leaf, garlic, dill, parsley, pepper, fresh mushrooms, paprika, curry powder, marjoram

Soups

chives, onion, garlic, chili powder, oregano, thyme, bay leaf, parsley

Vegetables

Corn	green pepper, fresh tomato
Cucumber	chives, dill, garlic, vinegar
Green Beans	dill, lemon juice, marjoram, nutmeg
Tomatoes	basil, marjoram, onion, oregano, onion, parsley
Peas	green pepper, mint, fresh mushrooms
Salads	dry mustard mixed with vinegar and sugar, lemon juice, chives, parsley, garlic, onion, pepper, oregano
Potatoes	green pepper, onion, pepper, chives, parsley, paprika, dill
Rice	chives, green pepper, onion, paprika, parsley

Here is a recipe to use in place of salt:

Herb Shaker Recipe			
½ tsp	basil	1 tbsp	dry mustard
½ tsp	white pepper	1 tsp	thyme
1 tbsp	onion powder	¼ tsp	celery seed
1 tbsp	garlic powder	¼ tsp	rosemary
		½ tsp	paprika
Directions: Mix the above into an empty shaker with a few grains of raw rice to allow for easy flow.			

Conversions:

¼ tsp = 1 ml, ½ tsp = 2 ml, 1 tsp = 5 ml, 1 tbsp = 15 ml
tsp = teaspoon, tbsp = tablespoon, ml = millilitre

Guidelines to eat less sodium

Food	Say Yes	Say No
<p>Vegetables 4 or more servings a day</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • vegetables - fresh or frozen • vegetables - canned, no salt added • vegetable juice - low sodium or salt free • mashed potatoes - homemade, without added salt • pasta sauce - homemade, without added salt and allowed vegetables 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • vegetables – frozen in a sauce • vegetables - canned • vegetable juice - regular • sauerkraut, pickles, pickled vegetables and others prepared in brine • pasta sauce - commercial • instant potato mixes
<p>Fruit 3 or more servings a day</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • fresh, frozen or canned • all fruit juices 	
<p>Milk and Alternatives 2 to 3 servings a day</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • milk, soy milk • yogurt • cheese – hard or block (1 ½ ounces or 50 grams a day) • cottage cheese - low sodium or sodium reduced • ricotta cheese 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • buttermilk • processed cheese slices, cheese spreads and sauces • cottage cheese

Food	Say Yes	Say No
<p>Meat and Alternatives 2 to 3 servings a day</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • meat, fish or poultry – fresh or frozen • tuna or salmon - canned, low sodium or rinse well • eggs and unflavoured egg substitutes • peanut butter, regular or unsalted • nuts and seeds, unsalted • legumes such as kidney beans, chick peas and lentils, - dried or canned (rinsed) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • smoked, salted, cured or koshered meats such as sausages, hot dogs, bacon, ham, pickled fish, canned meats • deli meats or cold cuts - bologna, turkey breast or ham • pickled eggs • frozen, convenience foods such as lasagna, TV dinners, pizza, hamburgers, french fries or breaded meat, fish or chicken such as chicken fingers • nuts and seeds - salted • baked beans - canned • commercial or store bought pot pies
<p>Soups</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • homemade broths and soups without added salt and made with allowed vegetables • commercially canned and dehydrated soups, broths and bouillons with less than 400 mg of sodium per serving 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • regular canned soups, broths or bouillon • some sodium-reduced soups – check the label and avoid if over 400 mg of sodium per serving • regular dry soup mixes, bouillon cubes, powder or concentrated liquid

Food	Say Yes	Say No
Fats	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • vegetable oils • sour cream • cream • cream cheese 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • snack dips made with dried soup mixes or processed cheese • commercially prepared sauces, gravies
Grains, Breads and Cereals (6 to 8 servings a day)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • low sodium breads and rolls • regular breads and rolls (up to 3 servings a day) • muffins, homemade, without added salt • cooked cereals without added salt • unsalted crackers, breadsticks and rice cakes • low-sodium or homemade bread crumbs • rice, barley, quinoa, couscous, bulgur, kasha, millet • spaghetti, macaroni and other pastas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • muffin and bread mixes, packaged • instant hot cereals • pancakes (mixes and frozen) • waffles (mixes and frozen) • bread stuffing, packaged • crackers with salted tops • self-rising flour and biscuit mixes • bread crumbs or cracker crumbs, packaged • rice and pasta mixes, packaged • dry cereals with more than 200 mg sodium per serving such as Shreddies and Cheerios

Food	Say Yes	Say No
<p>Other</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • seasonings such as “McCormicks No Salt Added[®], Mrs. Dash[®], PC Blue Menu No Salt Seasoning Blends[®] • salt substitute such as “No Salt[®] with doctor’s approval • pepper • herbs, spices • vinegar • lemon or lime juice • fresh ground horseradish • unsalted popcorn • tortilla chips, low sodium • carbonated beverages <p>Limit to 1 serving a day:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • hot pepper sauce (1 tsp) • salsa (2 tbsp) • soy sauce, reduced-sodium (1/2 tsp) • soy sauce, low sodium (1 serving as labelled) • barbecue sauce (1 tbsp) • relish (1 tbsp) • ketchup (1 tbsp) • mustard (1 tbsp) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • any seasoning made with salt including garlic salt, celery salt, onion salt, seasoned salt and lemon pepper • sea salt • rock salt • kosher salt • meat tenderizers • meat coating mixes • monosodium glutamate (MSG) • regular soy sauce • teriyaki sauce • steak sauce • Worcestershire sauce • black bean sauce • hoisin sauce • canned gravy and mixes • salted snack foods • olives • artificial fruit flavoured crystals with salt or sodium containing ingredients • instant pudding and cake mixes

What is stress?

Stress is caused by a demand on your physical or mental energy.

Many events in your life can be a source of stress such as changing jobs, moving and going through a loss. Every day issues such as driving in rush hour, conflicts with family members or dealing with long line-ups can also cause stress.

Your thoughts about these events determine how you react and create the level of stress you feel. If you usually respond to life's events and challenges in a negative way, your health and happiness may suffer.

Stress is not so much what happens to you, but how you respond to a situation or event.

Since everyone has stress, it is important to learn how to recognize and manage it. Although some medications may help control your response to stress, there are many skills you can learn as well.

How do I know when I am stressed?

Each person has his or her own ways of responding to stress.

Some physical signs of stress are:

- muscle tension in the jaw, neck, shoulders or lower back
- headache
- 'jumping' muscles
- trouble sleeping
- changes in appetite
- feeling tired all of the time

Some emotional signs of stress are feeling:

- helpless and frustrated
- a loss of control over your life
- anxious or sad
- irritable, touchy, hostile
- worried

Some changes in behaviour as a result of stress are:

- eating too much or not enough
- drinking alcohol
- smoking
- outburst of crying or anger
- less interest in sex

Some changes in thoughts as a result of stress are:

- decreased memory
- racing thoughts
- poor concentration
- always looking at the negative
- always expecting the worst

The next time you notice any of these responses, it is a good sign you need to change the way you deal with stress. Each person needs to learn his or her own ways to deal with stress.

Learning to deal with stress helps reduce the harmful effects it can have on your body.

What can stress do to my heart?

Some people deal with stress by drinking or eating too much, or not exercising enough. These ways of dealing with stress can increase your:

- chances of making heart failure worse
- chances of having angina or a heart attack
- blood pressure
- bad cholesterol levels

Who else is affected by my stress?

Your family and friends may be affected when you are stressed. They also have their own stresses to deal with. Together, you can make changes and learn ways to deal with stress. When members of a family and friends work together to make changes, everyone can benefit.

Ways to deal with stress

There are 3 ways to deal with stress:

1. Adapt to the stress
2. Alter the stress
3. Avoid the stress

Each section describes many things you can do to help.

1. Adapt to the stress

Stress is part of everyday life. You cannot change the way other people behave but you can learn to respond to the stress in a different way by changing how you think, feel and behave.

Here are some ways to help change your response to stress:

Take time to relax

There are many ways to relax. Find a quiet place. Read a book, listen to music, meditate or take a long bath. Try to do something to relax at least once a day. You need to take time for yourself.



Deep breathing or belly breathing

During your day, take some time to clear your mind and think about your breathing. Deep breathing or belly breathing helps your lungs bring in as much oxygen as they can.

Put your hands on your stomach or belly. Take a deep breath in through your nose slowly. Push your stomach or belly out. Blow the breath out slowly through your mouth.

Do this 2 to 3 times to relax. Repeat this throughout the day. You can do deep breathing or belly breathing anytime and anywhere.

Clear your mind

Find a quiet place to sit or lie down. Focus your mind on a single, peaceful thought or image. Spend a few minutes taking this time for you.

Think relaxation

- Sit quietly.
- Focus your mind on this sentence “My right arm feels heavy and warm”.
- Repeat this sentence while focusing in turn on your left arm, right leg, left leg, and so on.
- Focus on slowly relaxing your body in warm water from your toes to your head.

Progressive muscle exercise

- Tense your lower leg muscle and see how it feels.
- Release the tension and see how it feels.
- Think about the difference between the two feelings.
- Repeat this exercise with all the major muscles in your body.

Follow an exercise program

Regular exercise is a great way to deal with stress. Find an exercise or sport you enjoy that is safe for you to do. Some people find it helpful to exercise with a friend. See pages 16 to 23 for more information on exercise.

Stretching

Ask a physiotherapist or kinesiologist for stretching exercises that are safe for you to do. You can learn to stretch the muscles in your lower back, neck, arms, shoulders, legs and upper back. Do not stretch without advice about the right way to stretch. See pages 20 to 23 for examples of stretching exercises.

Eat healthy

Healthy eating can suffer during times of high stress. The combination of stress and poor eating habits can increase your chances of catching colds, flu and other infections. Keeping healthy and well nourished helps you handle stress.

Plan your activities

Sometimes you can plan healthy ways to deal with stress. For example, if a friend or relative causes you stress, go to their house for a visit so you can leave when you want to.

Make time for things you like to do such as being with friends and family, gardening, visiting a museum, driving in the country, reading and walking. Remember, not everyone enjoys the same thing. Being with family may be enjoyable for some and stressful for others.

Do things that make you laugh and be happy. Read the comics, watch a funny show, listen to music or volunteer at something you would enjoy. Laughing takes your mind off stress and is very good for your health.

2. Alter the stress

Remove or change the causes of stress.

Manage time

For example, if you feel you have too many jobs to do:

- sit down and make a “To Do List”
- decide on the most important jobs to do
- make a plan
- think about the jobs you can give to someone else to do
- ask for help
- accept help when offered
- talk to a friend, counsellor or spiritual advisor for advice



Pace yourself

Pace your activities to save energy. Rest before you are tired. This leaves you more in control. You may also have to learn to say “No”.

Problem-solve

When you have a problem, make a list of solutions. You may want to talk to other people to get ideas. Choose the best solution for you.

3. Avoid the stress

This is a temporary way to deal with stress. Sometimes you may need to move yourself or get away from the situation that is causing stress.

Here are some examples of how to avoid stress:

- If the family is fighting, leave the room. Listen to music or take a walk.
- A 10-minute “time-out” to take a stroll and clear your mind can help ease tension and allow you to better deal with the situation later.

Remember ...

Do not expect instant success when you try to lower your stress level.

It takes most people years to create their lifestyles and patterns of dealing with stress. Be kind and gentle with yourself. Learning new skills to lower stress is like learning to walk – only one step at a time and a few trips along the way. You get there step by step.

There are many ways to cope with the stress in your life. You will learn ways that work well for you. It also helps to talk to other people about how they deal with stress.

How do I know when I should talk to my health care provider or get help?

You should ask for help to deal with stress when you:

- feel completely alone, overwhelmed or helpless
- often feel depressed or sad
- have trouble sleeping
- cannot focus
- cry often
- have mood swings

There are people and programs that can help. Talk to your health care provider for more information.

What are some emotions I may feel?

Having heart failure can be frightening. It is normal for you to have changes in your feelings and moods.

If any of the feelings below last longer than 8 weeks, you need to talk to a member of your health care team and get some help.

Anger

You may feel angry and wonder why this happened to you. You may try to hide your anger and become short tempered or quiet.

Anxiety

You may feel anxious about your tests and treatments. You may also feel anxious wondering whether you will get better. You may be worried about dying.

Depression

Many people with heart failure and their family members feel depressed at some point. Symptoms of depression may include:

- always worrying about the future
- feeling hopeless
- worrying about taking care of your family
- being concerned about changes in your activities or lifestyle
- having very little interest in other people and what is happening around you
- having very little interest in food
- feeling tired
- having trouble sleeping
- crying easily

Denial

Some people cannot believe they have heart failure or that their injured heart will slow them down. You may try to test yourself by doing more exercise than you have been advised, doing office work at home, or heavy work around the house. Follow the advice you have been given to avoid more health problems.

All of these feelings are normal. You may have one or more of these feelings at one time. It is important to talk about your feelings with someone you trust. Your feelings should improve over time.



Learning to live with heart failure is a life long process. You can contact your local chapter of the Heart and Stroke Foundation for support groups, reading material and other resources.

When you are a caregiver

Your loved one may need your help every day to help manage his or her heart failure. Even though your help is very important to the person with heart failure, you also need support for your role as a caregiver.

Tips for caregivers

- Take care of yourself. For example, eat well and get enough sleep. This will help you take better care of your loved one with heart failure.
- Get help from others, even if your loved one prefers to only have you help him or her. When people offer to help, give them ideas on specific things they can do to help. Everyone needs and deserves support. It is selfish to turn down help from others.
- Do something to refresh yourself every day. Walking, reading or doing something that you enjoy is important. Little things that fill your heart with joy and hope will help you stay positive. Caregiving can be a very hard job and you deserve some quality time that makes you feel good.
- Get information and learn more about heart failure. The more you know, the more likely you will feel you have control or not worry as much with your caregiving role. Ask all the questions you need to better understand information.
- Share your story with a good friend, family member, health care provider or counsellor. Talking to someone may be the most simple and helpful way of coping with the demands of caregiving. You may want to join a support group. Talk to your health care team to learn more about the services in your area.

- Recognize you may have different feelings about your role as a caregiver. One day you may feel wonderful and then next day sad and lonely. Other times you may feel angry or frustrated over the losses you experience because of your caregiving role or your loved one's heart failure. Some people feel anxious because they feel responsible for their loved one's health or behaviour. All of these emotions are part of the natural responses to hurt and loss.

If these feelings last more than 8 weeks, or seem overwhelming for you, talk to your health care provider or a member of your loved one's health care team.

- Trust your instincts. You know your loved one better than anyone else. If you notice changes that concern or worry you, tell your health care provider right away.
- Take pride in what you accomplish and the courage it takes as a caregiver. Even though it may be hard to see, you are loved and the person with heart failure is grateful for your help and support.

Plan for the future. Talk with your loved one to plan for the chance that the heart failure may get worse or you may not be about to provide the care that is needed. Even though the course of heart failure is difficult to predict, planning for the future may help ease you and your loved one's worries or concerns.

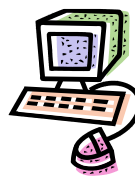
- Celebrate the little things in life! Even in difficult times, look for something, no matter how small, that you can celebrate. Enjoy your time with your loved one.

Helpful websites

<http://www.heartmates.com/>

<http://www.heartfailurematters.org/>

<http://www.heart.org/>



Resource book

“Hold That Hidden Salt!” by Maureen Tilley, Formac Publishing Company Ltd., 2011.

When to call for help

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 pink sputum.

Weight Diary

Weigh yourself every day. The best time to weigh yourself is in the morning sometime after you go to the bathroom and before you eat breakfast.

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

Date	Weight	How you are feeling (short of breath, tired, swelling)	Did you call your health care provider about a weight gain or loss? Advice?

Community resources

Hamilton Community Care Access Centre

905-523-8600 or 1-800-450-8002

website: www.hamilton.ccac-ont.ca

Heart & Stroke Foundation of Ontario

1439 Upper Ottawa Street
Hamilton, Ontario
L8W 3J6

905-574-4105

1-866-797-0000 or 1-866-797-0007

website: www.heartandstroke.ca

Telehealth Ontario

Free service. Talk to a registered nurse on the telephone,
24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Hamilton office: 905-574-4105

Your family doctor

Name: _____

Phone: _____

Your health care provider for your heart failure

Name: _____

Phone: _____

Your pharmacist

Name: _____

Phone: _____

