

# The Heart Failure Handbook



TOMORROW'S  
**HEART**  
CARE IS HERE.



The  
**Christ Hospital**<sup>™</sup>  
Heart & Vascular Center

The Christ Hospital Health Network

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## Find more information about these topics and more at: [TheChristHospital.com](http://TheChristHospital.com)

- Smoking cessation
- Reducing alcohol
- Pacemakers and devices
- Cookbooks and low sodium recipes
- Printable weight and heart failure zone trackers
- Cardiovascular testing
- Advanced heart failure treatment options
  - Ventricular Assist Devices
- Cardiac rehabilitation



### Other helpful websites:

**American Heart Association**

*[americanheart.org](http://americanheart.org)*

**American Association of Heart Failure Nurses**

*[AAHFN.org/  
patienteducation](http://AAHFN.org/patienteducation)*

# What is Heart Failure?

Heart failure, or HF, is a diagnosis that means your heart is not pumping enough blood to the rest of your body.

This can cause you to feel short of breath, tired or have swelling in your legs or belly.

Normally, the heart fills completely and pumps out 50-75% of this blood every beat. This number is called your ejection fraction (EF), and can be low in heart failure.

## There are two major kinds of heart failure:

1. Systolic heart failure: the heart cannot pump blood out well
2. Diastolic heart failure: the heart is stiff and cannot fill with blood well

It is possible to have both systolic and diastolic types of heart failure at the same time.

## Heart failure management

**In its early stages, heart failure can often be managed with medication and a healthy lifestyle.** Read on to find information and tools that can help you accomplish this. As the disease progresses and the heart becomes weaker, treatment gets more complex. This is the time to have difficult, yet important, conversations with your family and doctor about the care you want to receive.<sup>1</sup>

### Palliative care

Palliative care is specialized medical care for people with serious illnesses including heart failure. This type of care is focused on providing patients support due to the symptoms, pain and stresses of heart failure. The goal is to improve quality of life for both patients and their family.

Palliative care is:

- Appropriate at any age or stage and can be provided together with heart failure treatment
- Provided by a team of doctors, nurses, social workers, and chaplains who work with a patient's other doctors to provide an extra layer of support.

### Advanced treatment options

There may be more advanced options for some patients. The Christ Hospital offers patients access to ventricular assist devices for treatment of end-stage heart failure. To learn more, talk to your doctor.

### Hospice

Different than palliative care, hospice is end-of-life care focused on comfort when life-prolonging treatments are no longer working.

<sup>1</sup> American Heart Association, 2014

# How to Live Well with Heart Failure

- Monitor your symptoms every day.
- Weigh yourself every morning.
- Take your medications every day.
- Eat the right amount of salt.
- Drink the right amount of fluids.
- Exercise and stay active .
- Stay in communication with your doctors.

## How to weigh yourself every morning:

1. On the same scale
2. Close to the same time
3. After going to the bathroom
4. Before getting fully dressed
5. Before eating breakfast

Quick changes in weight can be a sign that your body is holding onto too much fluid.

It is important to write your weight down on a log to be able to notice these changes and take action if needed.

Talk to your doctor about your goal or “target” weight at each visit. This is the weight where you will feel your best.



# HEART FAILURE ZONES

My goal weight is: \_\_\_\_\_

I will monitor my symptoms daily and take action if ONE or MORE are in the yellow or red zone.

	GO ZONE	CAUTION ZONE	STOP ZONE
<b>WEIGHT</b> 	I am at my goal weight	I have gained or lost 3 or more lbs in a day or 5 or more lbs in a week	I have gained or lost more than 5 lbs in a day or 7 lbs in a week
<b>SWELLING</b> 	I have NO increase in swelling	I have some increased swelling	I have a lot of swelling
<b>BREATHING</b> 	I have NO trouble breathing or my breathing is normal for me	I feel more short of breath doing my normal activities  I need to use more pillows when I sleep	I feel short of breath at rest and cannot catch my breath  I need to sit in a chair to sleep
<b>ENERGY</b> 	I have my normal amount of energy	I feel more tired or weak	I feel very tired and can barely do my normal activities
<b>NEXT STEPS</b> 	All are green: My symptoms are in control! I will continue with my normal daily routine	One or more are yellow: I need to take action <b>TODAY!</b> I will call my doctor _____ at (____) _____	One or more are red: <b>I NEED TO TAKE IMMEDIATE ACTION AND CALL MY DOCTOR'S OFFICE OR 911!</b>



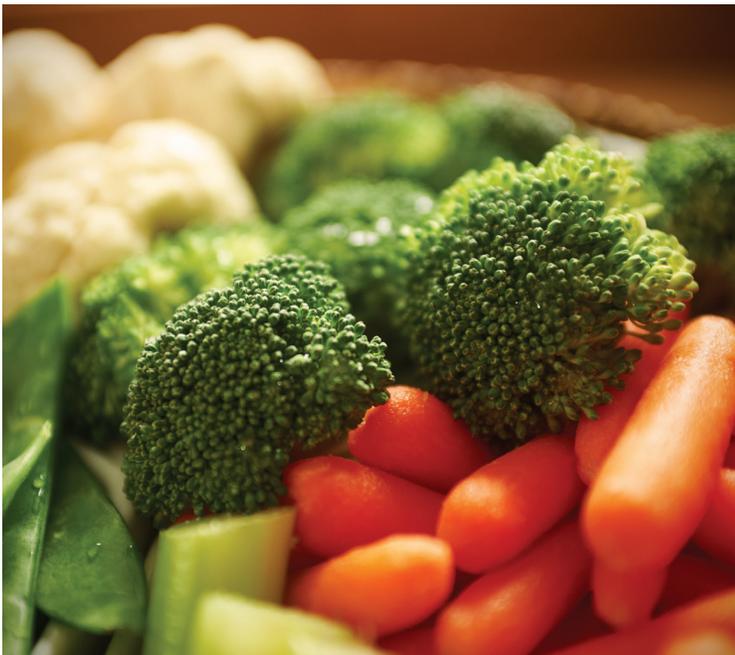
## Eat the right amount of salt

The more salt you consume, the more fluid you retain. This can make your symptoms worse. Follow the recommendation of your doctor to see how much salt you are able to have in your diet. The American Heart Association recommends a daily salt (sodium) intake of 1,500 mg, or 1.5 grams.

1 teaspoon salt = 2400 mg of sodium

### How to eat less salt:

- First, get rid of the salt shaker and replace it with one of the no salt seasoning blends, like Mrs. Dash, or pepper.
- Read food labels! Salt is hidden in most foods, so it is very important for you and anyone who buys food for you to know how to read labels to find low-sodium foods.
- Avoid eating at restaurants, especially fast food.
- Limit the amount of canned, packaged, and prepared frozen foods you eat.



<b>Nutrition Facts</b>			
Serving Size 1 cup (228g)			
Servings Per Container 2			
<b>Amount Per Serving</b>			
<b>Calories</b> 250	Calories from Fat 110		
<b>% Daily Value*</b>			
<b>Total Fat</b> 12g		18%	
Saturated Fat 3g		15%	
<i>Trans</i> Fat 3g			
<b>Cholesterol</b> 30 mg		10%	
<b>Sodium</b> 470mg		20%	
<b>Total Carbohydrate</b> 31g		10%	
Dietary Fiber 0g		0%	
Sugars 5g			
<b>Protein</b> 5g			
Vitamin A		4%	
Vitamin C		2%	
Calcium		20%	
Iron		4%	
	Calories:	2,000	2,500
Total Fat	Less than	65g	80g
Sat Fat	Less than	20g	25g
Cholesterol	Less than	300mg	300mg
Sodium	Less than	2,400mg	2,400mg
Total Carbohydrate		300g	375g
Dietary Fiber		25g	30g

## Drink the right amount of fluids

Limiting fluid intake may help reduce your symptoms. Your doctor may recommend that you restrict fluid intake to 2000 ml, or 2 liters per day.

### What counts?

Liquids like water, milk, juice, coffee, tea and soda pop. Foods such as Jell-O®, soup, ice cream and ice chips.

**1 cup = 8 ounces fluid**

**64 ounces fluid = 8 cups = 2000 ml = 2 liters**

**1 cup ice = ½ cup water**

### How to start monitoring your fluid intake:

1. Each morning, put an empty 2 liter pitcher on your counter.
2. Every time you drink something, put that same amount of water into the pitcher.
3. If you have filled your pitcher over half way before noon, you are drinking too much. Once the pitcher has reached the 2 liter mark, you are NOT to drink anymore until the next morning.
4. Start again each morning.

### Helpful Hints

- Drink any fluid after your meal, not during your meal.
- If you absolutely need something to drink with your meal, use only a 4 ounce cup or Dixie® cup size.
- If you become thirsty during the day, try sugar-free gum, hard candy, a single popsicle or frozen grapes.

## Exercise and Stay Active

### Benefits of exercise

- Increases your energy level, so you can do more activity without becoming tired
- Improves flexibility, strength, sleep, weight
- Reduces stress, tension, anxiety and depression
- Reduces risk factors, such as high blood pressure, high cholesterol

### How to stay active

- Choose an activity that you enjoy: walking, swimming, hiking
- Exercise with someone—it will keep you motivated
- Include activity in your daily routine
- Before beginning any exercise program, discuss it with your doctor

### When should you stop exercising?

- If you develop chest pain or pressure
- If you feel dizzy, like you are going to pass out
- If you get short of breath, where you cannot complete a sentence (do not stop immediately, but slow down first)
- If you become excessively tired
- If your heart is racing



## Heart failure medications

### Your medications each act in a different way to help you feel well

#### Take your medications every day as directed:

- Do NOT skip medications, even if you are feeling better
- NEVER take more medication than prescribed
- If you miss a dose, do NOT double up on medication, unless told to do so by your healthcare provider.

#### Be informed and prepared:

- Carry a list of your medications (including non-prescription medications, vitamins, and natural products/herbal medicines), doses, and how often you take it in your wallet or purse and show it to all of your doctors
- Carry plenty of medications with you when you travel
- Know what each medication is for and what it looks like
- Call your pharmacy for a refill several days BEFORE you are out of your medication.

#### Report to your doctor:

- If you are concerned you may have medication side effects
- If you are not able to afford your medications.

#### Avoid non-prescription medications, vitamins, and herbal medicines, unless recommended by your doctor. Many can interfere with heart failure medications or worsen heart failure such as:

- Anti-inflammatory agents, such as ibuprofen (Motrin, Advil), aspirin, and naproxen (Aleve)
- Cough and cold medicines and decongestants
- Sodium-based antacids such as Alka-Selzer.

**Always call your healthcare provider if you have any questions about your medications.**



On the next page is a chart listing the common medications used to treat heart failure, how they work, and possible side effects.

## Heart failure medications

Medication	How it works	Possible side effects
<b>Diuretics (Water Pills)</b> Lasix (furosemide) Demadex (torsemide) Bumex (bumetanide) Zaroxolyn (metolazone) Microzide (HCTZ, hydrochlorothiazide)	Help the kidney to get rid of extra water. Help to relieve swelling and shortness of breath.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased urination (this means the pills are working)</li> <li>• Muscle cramps</li> <li>• Dizziness</li> <li>• Low potassium and magnesium levels</li> </ul>
<b>ACE-Inhibitors</b> Prinivil/Zestril (lisinopril) Vasotec (enalapril) Capoten (captopril)	Lowers blood pressure by relaxing blood vessels, so heart does not have to work as hard.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Swelling of tongue or lips—this is rare (<b>Go to the nearest Emergency Room right away</b>)</li> <li>• Dry cough</li> <li>• Dizziness</li> <li>• Low blood pressure</li> <li>• Altered sense of taste</li> </ul>
<b>Angiotensin II Receptor Blockers (ARB)</b> Cozaar (losartan) Diovan (valsartan)	Lowers blood pressure by relaxing blood vessels, so heart does not have to work as hard.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Swelling of tongue or lips—this is rare (<b>Go to the nearest Emergency Room right away</b>)</li> <li>• Dizziness</li> <li>• Low blood pressure</li> </ul>
<b>Beta-Blockers</b> Coreg (carvedilol) Toprol XL (metoprolol succinate) Zebeta (bisoprolol) Lopressor (metoprolol tartrate) Tenormin (atenolol)	Slows down heart rate and lowers blood pressure so heart does not have to work as hard.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feeling tired (usually goes away after a few weeks)</li> <li>• Dizziness</li> <li>• Low blood pressure</li> <li>• Slows heart rate</li> </ul>
<b>Aldosterone Blockers</b> Aldactone (spironolactone) Inspra (eplerenone)	Helps body get rid of salt and water. Raises blood potassium levels.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High potassium levels</li> <li>• Breast tenderness and growth in men and women (Contact your doctor if bothersome)</li> </ul>
<b>Lanoxin (digoxin)</b>	Helps the heart to pump better and decreases the symptoms of heart failure.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nausea/vomiting</li> <li>• Loss of appetite</li> <li>• Vision changes</li> </ul>
<b>Vasodilators</b> Apresoline (hydralazine) Imdur/Ismo (isosorbide mononitrate) Isordil (isosorbide dinitrate)	Relaxes blood vessels and lowers blood pressure. Makes it easier for heart to pump.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dizziness</li> <li>• Headache (temporary)</li> <li>• Stomach upset</li> <li>• Flushing</li> <li>• Low blood pressure</li> </ul>
<b>Potassium Supplements</b> K-Dur, Klor-Con, Micro K	Replace low levels of potassium in blood	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High potassium levels</li> <li>• Nausea</li> </ul>

# Heart Failure Resources

## Heart Works: A heart failure education and support group

Join us to learn more about managing heart failure.

**Location:** The Christ Hospital | A- level | Classroom 3

**Time:** 1:00 p.m., fourth Wednesday of the month (holiday schedule may differ)

To participate by phone, call **513-621-0220**, then enter passcode **764764#**.

- **Monthly group meetings** focused on sharing and receiving knowledge, experience, and support.  
**Months:** January, March, April, June, July, September, October, December  
*Refreshments provided. No RSVP required.*
- **Quarterly educational meetings** featuring a heart failure expert panel of cardiologists and other health care professionals.  
**Months:** February, May, August, November  
*Refreshments provided. RSVP encouraged.*

For additional information or to RSVP, please call **513-585-0378**.

## Important Telephone Numbers to Remember

Family Care Doctor \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone # \_\_\_\_\_

Cardiologist \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone # \_\_\_\_\_

Nurse in MD Office \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone # \_\_\_\_\_

Home Care Nurse \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone # \_\_\_\_\_

Other \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone # \_\_\_\_\_

Heart Failure Nurse at The Christ Hospital: **513-585-0378**

For more information, call

**513-585-0378**

TheChristHospital.com

