



Taking Care of Your Heart

Your Everyday
Guide to Living Well
with Heart Failure

What is Heart Failure?

Heart failure means your heart is not pumping blood as well as it should. This can make it harder for your body to get the oxygen and nutrients it needs.

Common Symptoms

- ☐ Shortness of breath
- ☐ Feeling tired or weak
- ☐ Swelling in feet, ankles, or legs

Other Symptoms

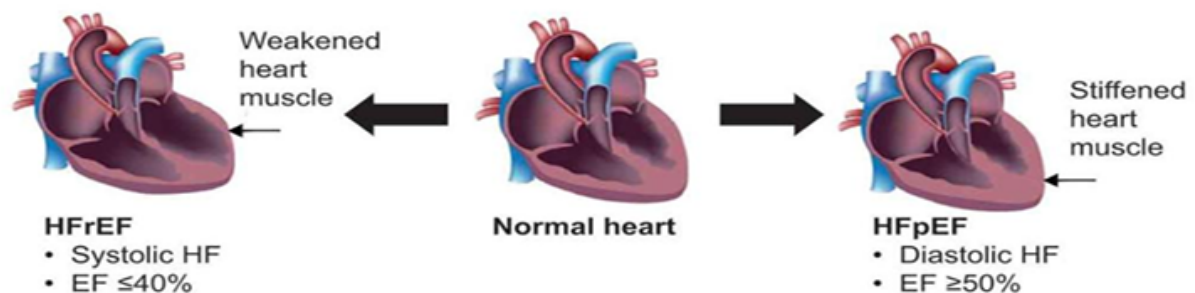
- ☐ Fast or racing heartbeat
- ☐ Cough that does not go away
- ☐ Lack of appetite

What Is My Ejection Fraction (EF)?

EF tells us how well your heart pumps blood. It is the amount of blood pumped out of your heart's lower chamber (ventricle) each time it contracts.

Reduced EF: Less than 40% Normal EF: 50–70%

My EF is: _____%



Reference for drawing: Toth, P. P., & Gauthier, D. (2020). Heart failure with preserved ejection fraction: disease burden for patients, caregivers, and the health-care system. *Postgraduate Medicine*, 133(2), 140–145. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00325481.2020.1842621>

Things I Can Do to Live Well with Heart Failure

- ☐ Take my medications EVER DAY as directed
- ☐ Eat healthy, eat less salt
- ☐ Stay active and exercise regularly
- ☐ Check my weight and Zone every day
- ☐ Call your doctor if symptoms get worse
- ☐ Keep your scheduled appointments

Remember: Heart failure can be managed.

Taking your medications, staying active, eating healthy, and monitoring symptoms can help you feel better and stay out of the hospital.

HEART FAILURE: TAKING YOUR MEDICINES

Taking your medicines as prescribed helps your heart work better, helping you to feel better, live longer, and helps keep you out of the hospital.

TAKE YOUR PILLS EVERY DAY

- Take your medicine at the right time each day.
- Do not skip doses, even when you feel well or when you are feeling sick.
- Tell your healthcare team right away if you have side effects right.
- Do not stop a medicine without talking to your healthcare provider.

DON'T RUN OUT OF PILLS

- Refill prescriptions before they run out.
- Use one pharmacy when possible.
- Ask for help if you have trouble paying for your medicines.

HAVE A SYSTEM

- Use a pill box or medication schedule.
- Keep your medicines in a place that will help you remember to take them.
- Keep an updated medication list with instructions.
- Bring your medication list or pill bottles to appointments.
- Take enough medicine with you when you leave home.

MY WATER PILL (DIURETIC)

Your diuretic controls the amount of water and salt in your body. Taking more of this pill will make you urinate (pee) more to get rid of salt and water—your doctor will guide any changes to this medicine to help keep your body in balance and manage your heart failure symptoms.

The name of my water pill is: _____

CALL MY HEALTHCARE TEAM IF:

- | | |
|---|---|
| ☐ I have side effects. | ☐ I cannot afford my medicines. |
| ☐ I miss doses often. | ☐ I am not sure how to take a medicine |

Remember: Never stop or change a medicine unless directed by your healthcare provider.

Bring your pills when you go to each doctor's visit. This will help you and your doctor keep you safe and make sure you don't run out of pills.

Your Healthy Eating Plate

For recipes and more resources for your wellness journey, visit peacehealth.org/healthy-you.

Fluids

Drink water, tea or coffee (with little or no sugar). Limit juice (1 small glass/day). Avoid sugary drinks like sodas and sweet teas.

Choose Whole Grains

Avoid refined grains (white rice, white bread and other products made with white flour).

Fruits

Apples	Kiwi
Banana	Mango
Berries	Melon
Grapes	Oranges

Grains/Starches

Barley (non-pearled)	Potatoes
Brown rice	Quinoa & oats
Corn	Whole-wheat pasta
Dried beans	
Peas & lentils	

Non-starchy Vegetables

Broccoli	Cauliflower
Brussels sprouts	Cucumber
Cabbage	Green beans
Carrots	Kale
	Onions
	Spinach
	Tomatoes
	Zucchini

Proteins

Chicken	Peas & lentils
Dried beans	Pork
Eggs	Tempeh
Fish	Tofu
Lean beef	Turkey
Nuts	

(Add milk, yogurt & cheese to protein options.)

Healthy Fats

Eat small amounts of healthy fats like avocados, Nuts and liquid oils. Limit butter and solid fats.

Protein Tips

Limit red meat. Avoid bacon, lunch meats and processed meats. Limit milk/dairy (1-2 servings/day)

What's on the Nutrition Facts Label?

Current Label

Nutrition Facts	
8 servings per container	
Serving size	2/3 cup (55g)
Amount per serving	
Calories	230
% Daily Value*	
Total Fat 8g	10%
Saturated Fat 1g	5%
Trans Fat 0g	
Cholesterol 0mg	0%
Sodium 160mg	7%
Total Carbohydrate 37g	13%
Dietary Fiber 4g	14%
Total Sugars 12g	
Includes 10g Added Sugars	20%
Protein 3g	
Vitamin D 2mcg	10%
Calcium 260mg	20%
Iron 8mg	45%
Potassium 240mg	6%
* The % Daily Value (DV) tells you how much a nutrient in a serving of food contributes to a daily diet. 2,000 calories a day is used for general nutrition advice.	

1

The serving size appears in large bold font. In this example the **Serving size is 2/3 cup (55g)**.

2

Calories are displayed in bold font. In this example **2/3 cup (55g)** provides **230 calories**.

3

The recommendation is generally <2300mg (1tsp) of sodium (salt) per day from **EVERYTHING** that enters your mouth, not just the saltshaker. Consult your provider for your specific sodium (salt) recommendation.

4

Included Added Sugar (which **should be no more than** 25g or 6tsp/day for women and 36g or 9tsp/day for men).

At the bottom of the label is Vitamin D, Calcium, Iron and Potassium.

Nutrition Facts Label

What's in it for you?



EXERCISING WITH HEART FAILURE

Regular activity is one of the best things you can do for your heart. Start small, stay consistent, and gradually do more.

WHY EXERCISE?

- Increase energy, feel more upbeat
- Daily activities become easier
- Improved shortness of breath
- Reduced leg and feet swelling
- Better quality of life
- Fewer hospitalizations

GETTING STARTED - BUILD UP SLOWLY:

It takes time for your body to get used to being more active

- Start with 10 minutes of activity each day
- Try walking, stationary biking, gardening, light housework, or approved exercise classes
- Walk 5 minutes away from home and 5 minutes back
- Add 5 minutes every few weeks as tolerated
- Goal: 30 minutes, 3–5 days each week

STAY SAFE

- STOP if you have chest pain
- STOP if you feel dizzy or lightheaded
- Call your healthcare provider if symptoms do not improve with rest
- STOP if severe shortness of breath occurs

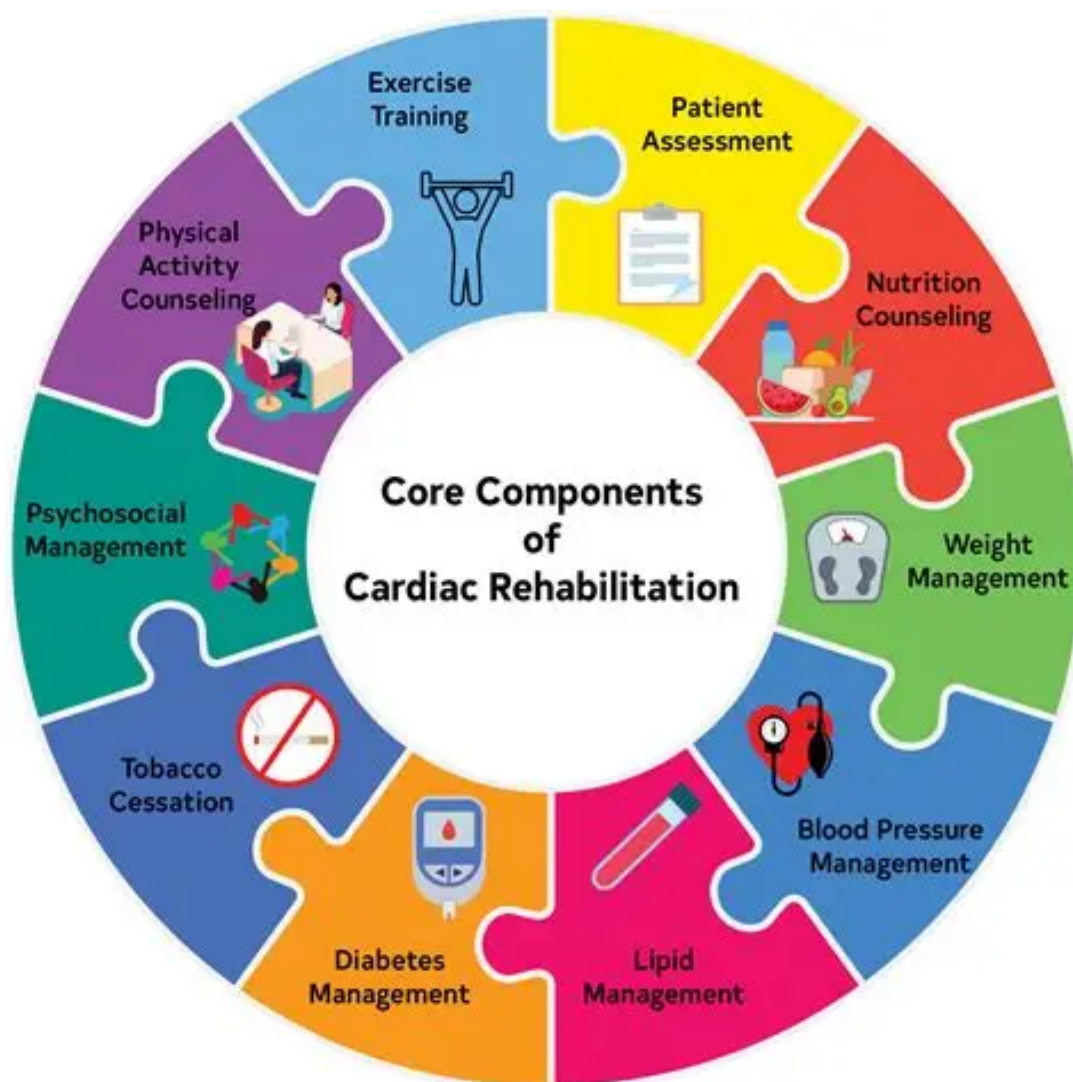
EXERCISE TIPS

- Exercise at the same time each day
- Wear comfortable shoes and clothing
- Exercise with a friend when possible
- Avoid temperatures above 80°F or below 35°F



CARDIAC REHABILITATION

- Ask your primary care provider or cardiologist if a cardiac rehab referral is right for you
- Cardiac rehab is a medically supervised program that combines exercise training, education on heart-healthy living, and education on managing stress to improve cardiovascular health and overall wellbeing
- Research shows that completing cardiac rehab significantly improves survival and quality of life



DAILY HEART FAILURE CHECK-UP

Why Daily Weights Matter

Weight gain is often the first sign that your body is holding extra fluid. You may gain weight from fluid buildup before you notice swelling or shortness of breath. Weighing yourself every morning helps you and your healthcare team find problems early and take action before symptoms get worse.

Check Yourself Every Morning

- Weigh yourself using the same scale every day.
- Weigh yourself after using the bathroom and before eating.
- Wear similar clothing each time.
- Notice if you are more short of breath than usual.
- Pay attention to feeling more tired, dizzy, or lightheaded.
- Check for new or increased swelling in your feet, ankles, legs, or abdomen.

Call Your Healthcare Provider If You Have

- ⚠ Weight gain of 3lbs overnight with symptoms (below) or 5lbs in a week.
- ⚠ More shortness of breath than usual
- ⚠ New or increased swelling
- ⚠ Needing more pillows to sleep because of shortness of breath
- ⚠ Feeling dizzy, lightheaded, or faint

HOW TO CHECK FOR SWELLING:

- Each morning press firmly into the skin on the front part of your lower leg
- If your finger makes a pit in your skin, you have swelling in that part of your leg
- Be aware of how much swelling is usual for you and look for changes

Remember: Small changes can be an early warning sign of worsening heart failure.

Checking your weight and symptoms every day can help keep you healthy and out of the hospital.

AM I SHORT OF BREATH WHEN WALKING?



Doing well
Walk easily with no shortness of breath



Getting worse
Shortness of breath after walking a short distance
Call your doctor



Even worse
Shortness of breath at rest
Go to Emergency room or call 9-1-1

AM I SHORT OF BREATH WHEN SLEEPING?



Doing well
Sleeping flat, no shortness of breath



Getting worse
Needing 2 pillows or more to avoid shortness of breath
Call your doctor



Even worse
Have to sleep upright to avoid shortness of breath
Call your doctor

AM I FEELING FAINT OR DIZZY?



Doing well
Not dizzy or sometimes a little dizzy when standing up



Getting worse
Dizzy for a long time
Call your doctor



Even worse
Almost passed out, passed out, or fallen
Call your doctor or go to the Emergency room

TO CHECK FOR SWELLING EACH MORNING...



Doing well
No swelling



Getting worse
Swelling in ankle or shin



Even worse
Swelling in knee or stomach area
Call your doctor

Everyday Actions

- ☐ Check weight in the morning (*before eating or drinking, but after urinating*)
- ☐ Daily symptom assessment
- ☐ Record weight and zone on the Weight/Zone Log
- ☐ Take all medications as prescribed

GREEN ZONE

***AT BASELINE OR
GETTING BETTER***

KEEP IT UP

- No weight gain
- No new or worsening shortness of breath or cough
- No new or worsening swelling in feet, ankles, legs or abdomen (edema)
- No new or worsening chest pain

*If in the **Green Zone**, your symptoms are under control. Continue with "Everyday Actions" list above and keep all provider appointments*

YELLOW ZONE

***NEW OR
WORSENING
SYMPTOMS***

CHECK IN

- Weight gain of 3lbs overnight with symptoms (below) or 5lbs in a week.
- New or worsening shortness of breath that gets better with rest
- New or worsening cough
- New or worsening difficulty sleeping lying down (needing to prop oneself up with more pillows or sleeping upright in a chair)
- New or worsening swelling (edema) in feet, ankles, legs or abdomen
- New or worsening fatigue
- New or worsening dizziness

*If in the **Yellow Zone**, call your healthcare provider right away*

Name: _____ **Ph. Number:** _____

RED ZONE

EMERGENCY

EMERGENCY

- Struggling to breathe or loud noises/gurgling when breathing
- New shortness of breath that does not go away with rest
- New or worsening chest pain or pressure
- New severe confusion

*If in the **Red Zone**, go to the Emergency Room or call 9-1-1 right away*

Heart Failure Weight/Zone Log

Each Day: **Record your weight**, after you have used the restroom in the a.m., and **circle your zone** (**green**, **yellow**, or **red**)

Important: Take this log with you to your doctor's appointment

Green – Your Symptoms are under control **Yellow** – Call your doctor's office right away **Red** – Go to the Emergency Room or call 9-1-1

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