

***** If your doctor has told you that you have heart failure,
you may need to follow these guidelines. *****

Heart Failure Management Guidelines

About heart failure

The heart pumps blood to all the body parts. Heart failure means that the heart as a pump is not able to keep up with the body's needs. Fluid may back up in the lungs and other parts of the body and cause "congestion". These are some of the signs of "congestive" heart failure:

- | | |
|-----------------------|---------------------------|
| Ø shortness of breath | Ø changes in heart rhythm |
| Ø swelling | Ø dry cough |
| Ø weight gain | Ø loss of appetite |
| Ø fatigue | |

Steps to manage heart failure

Presently there is no cure for heart failure. Several things can be done to help ease the workload on your heart and improve pump power.

- Medications can help strengthen the heart pump, reduce fluids in the body, lower blood pressure, and smooth heart rhythm. It is very important that you take all the medications ordered by your doctor, even if you are feeling well. Check with your doctor or pharmacist before taking any over-the-counter medicines.
- Eat less sodium (salt) in your diet because sodium holds fluids in the body. Total sodium should not be above 2000mg a day (=1 teaspoon table salt). Read labels on prepared foods for sodium content. Remove the salt shaker from your table.
- You may need to limit fluid intake to 8 cups a day or less as ordered by your doctor. This lightens the workload on the heart pump.
- Weigh yourself daily. This is the best way to measure fluid balance in your body. Weigh yourself this way:

Ø in the morning	Ø before you eat
Ø on the same scale	Ø after you urinate
Ø in the same clothing	Ø <u>WRITE DOWN</u> your weight on a calendar
- Balance daily activities, exercise, rest and sleep.

***** When to call your doctor *****

- If you notice ANY signs of "congestive" heart failure.
- If you gain 2 pounds in one day or 3-5 pounds in one week

