

Heart Failure Self-Care

This playbook provides a step-by-step guide to self-monitoring and managing heart failure, including tracking symptoms, fluid management, and understanding when to contact healthcare professionals.

Step 1: **Symptom Diary**

Maintain a daily diary to record heart failure symptoms, including shortness of breath, fatigue, and swelling in the legs, ankles, and feet.

Step 2: **Weigh Regularly**

Weigh yourself at the same time each day, preferably in the morning, using the same scale to monitor for sudden weight gain which may indicate fluid retention.

Step 3: **Fluid Intake**

Manage your fluid intake according to your doctor's recommendations, which typically involve restricting the amount of fluids you consume to avoid fluid overload.

Step 4: **Salt Restriction**

Adhere to a low-sodium diet by avoiding high-salt foods and not adding extra salt to meals to help prevent fluid retention.

Step 5: Medication Adherence

Take prescribed heart failure medications regularly and as directed by your healthcare provider to manage your condition effectively.

Step 6: Lifestyle Modifications

Incorporate lifestyle changes such as regular physical activity, quitting smoking, and managing stress to improve heart function and overall well-being.

Step 7: Recognize Warning Signs

Be vigilant about new or worsening symptoms such as rapid weight gain, increased swelling, or shortness of breath, which may indicate your heart failure is worsening.

Step 8: Seek Medical Help

Contact your healthcare provider or seek immediate medical attention if you experience severe symptoms or if your usual symptoms significantly worsen.

General Notes

Emergency Plan

Always have an emergency plan in place, including having contact information for your healthcare provider and knowing the location of the nearest hospital.

Regular Check-ups

Schedule and attend regular check-ups with your healthcare provider to monitor the progression of your heart failure and adjust your treatment plan as needed.

Support System

Establish a support system of family, friends, or support groups who understand your condition and can provide assistance and encouragement.