

# Taking steps to help you and your healthcare provider manage heart failure

## Learn about heart failure and know the symptoms

---

The term *heart failure* may sound scary. It does not mean your heart has stopped working. It means your heart is not pumping properly. Fluid retention is a key factor in worsening heart failure. Too much fluid makes it difficult for your heart to pump properly. There are steps you and your provider can take to help manage heart failure.

Your provider may ask you to:

- **Make changes to your diet**

For instance, eat foods that are lower in salt, saturated fat, and cholesterol

- **Drink the right amount of fluids**

Ask your provider what kinds of fluids and how much of them you should have daily

- **Weigh yourself every morning**

You can see changes in your weight due to extra fluid in your body

- **Assess your physical activity level**

Ask your provider what exercise plan would be right for you

- **Take your medicines exactly as your provider tells you**

- **Know which symptoms to watch for**

For example, do you:

- feel short of breath when you're resting?
- feel more tired than usual?
- have an increased heart rate?
- have a frequent cough, especially at night?
- have swelling in your legs, ankles, feet, or abdomen?
- have a loss in your appetite?
- see a sudden weight gain?

Report any of these symptoms to your provider right away

- **Quit smoking**

Smoking can lower the amount of oxygen carried in your blood. Quitting smoking can help get more oxygen to your heart

It is important to follow all of your provider's instructions. They all work together.

---

**Talk to your healthcare provider about your role in helping to manage your heart failure.**

---