

8 Tips for Heart Health



Take Your Prescribed Medications



Following the directives of your medical provider for medication management is essential to maintain the highest cardiac function.

Check for Swelling in Your Feet, Ankles, Legs or Stomach



Swelling is a warning signal. Excess fluid causes the heart to have to work harder and/or exacerbates the ineffective heart function. Report it to your medical provider.

Watch and Record Your Daily Fluid Intake



Too much fluid forces the heart to work extra hard to pump the excess fluid volume. This can increase your symptoms: shortness of breath, weight gain, bloating and swelling of the feet or legs.

Weigh Yourself



Before breakfast, weigh yourself and write it down. Compare it to your last weight. Call your doctor or nurse if you see a gain of 2 pounds or more in a 24 hour period or 5 pounds or more in one week.

Balance Activity and Rest Periods



Your medical provider, nurse, physical therapist or occupational therapist can help you develop an exercise and activity plan that works on muscle strength and flexibility.

Eat Foods Low in Salt



Eat foods that are fresh, colorful and unprocessed. Salt hides out in a lot of foods we might think are healthy. We have some quick and easy tips on how to reduce your salt intake in this recent Marquis blog (<https://www.marquiscompanies.com/blog/those-new-warnings-about-salt/>)

Everyday Determine Your Heart Zone

Knowing when to call your doctor is as easy as knowing these three color zones -- green, yellow and red.

The Green Zone

This is your goal. Your symptoms are under control. You're not experiencing any shortness of breath; weight gain of 2 pounds in a 24 hour period; ankle, leg or stomach swelling; or chest pain.



The Yellow Zone

This is your warning zone. Call your doctor or home health nurse if you experience weight gain of 2 pounds or more in a 24 hour period or 5 pounds or more in one week (If your weight increases 2 pounds or more in a 24 hour period or 5 pounds or more in 1 week, notify your doctor or nurse); increased shortness of breath and difficulty breathing when lying down; increased swelling of your feet, ankles, legs or stomach; dry cough; dizziness; or an uneasy, "something's not right" feeling.

The Red Zone

This is the emergency zone. Go to the emergency room or call 911 immediately if you're struggling to breathe; or experiencing unrelieved shortness of breath while sitting still, chest pain, confusion and inability to think clearly.

(Try to) Get 7 Hours of Sleep

Sleep helps reduce stress and inflammation, allowing your cells to "remodel" and your body and mind to heal.

So, set yourself up for success with the following:

- Limit your caffeine intake to the morning.
- Don't nap too long during the day.
- Avoid screen time before bedtime. The blue light emitting from your electronic devices triggers a chemical release in the brain that tells you to stay awake.
- Limit fluid intake before bed.
- Invest in a comfortable mattress and bedding.
- Keep your room on the cool side.
- If you snore, talk to your doctor about getting tested for sleep apnea.

