

Watching Your Weight with Congestive Heart Failure

Your healthcare provider has talked to you about the heart condition you have called “congestive heart failure.” You may also hear it called CHF or heart failure. People with CHF have a heart that has been made weak by such things as heart attack, high blood pressure, heart valve problems or other types of heart disease. A heart that has been made weak cannot pump blood as well as it should. This results in fluid collecting in the lungs and other parts of the body. Over time a person with CHF may have swelling, especially in the feet and ankles, shortness of breath, weakness, cough and weight gain.

It is very important for you to follow the plan of care your healthcare provider has given you. This includes:

- taking your medicines as they are prescribed
- following your diet by eating low salt and low fat foods
- stopping smoking
- avoiding drinking alcohol
- exercising as directed by your healthcare provider
- getting enough rest
- keeping your clinic appointments
- reporting weight gain and other signs of worsening heart failure.

Knowing how to watch your weight and what to report to your doctor are very important in treating your CHF. Weighing yourself daily is the best way to detect sudden weight gain. This booklet will help you keep a record of your weight and to realize when your weight needs to be reported to your doctor. You should weigh in the morning before you eat, on the same set of scales and wearing the same amount of clothing each time. Write down the date, time and your weight for each day in this booklet. You should report to your healthcare provider if you have:

- a weight gain of more than 2 pounds overnight**
- or**
- a weight gain of more than 3 pounds in the course of one week.**

Contact your health care provider during regular business hours. After hours, the phone triage nurse will answer your call and give you advice and instructions.

Please bring this booklet with the record of your weight each time you visit your Internal Medicine or Primary Care provider. Ask for a new booklet when you have completed all the spaces for recording your weight in this one.

We are very willing to work with you to keep you as healthy as possible and to prevent problems from your CHF.

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