

Weigh yourself each morning after you urinate and before breakfast. Wear light clothing. Remember to use the same scale and keep it on a flat, hard surface. *If you gain more than 2-3 pounds per day or more than 3-5 pounds in a week, call*

*your primary care provider promptly.*

Keep a record of your weight in your weight recorder.



**REMEMBER:** If you gain 10 pounds in one week, please report to the ER promptly.

*If the following symptoms worsen, consult your primary care provider:*

- Trouble breathing when lying flat or with activity
- Persistent productive cough
- Leg or ankle swelling
- New chest pain that does not go away with rest
- New and unexplained dizziness or lightheadedness
- Weight gain of 2 to 3 pounds in one day or 3 to 5 pounds in one week
- Weakness and unusual fatigue



**Why is it important for me to do this?**

- To control my heart failure symptoms, to decrease my chance of going to the hospital, and to help me live longer.
- To maintain my health and enjoy life with family and friends.

**Your health is important to us.**

Visit My Health<sub>vet</sub> at [www.myhealth.va.gov](http://www.myhealth.va.gov) to get more information on how you can improve your health!

**VA MEDICAL CENTER, WEST PALM BEACH**

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West Palm Beach, Florida 33410-6400

[www.myhealth.va.gov](http://www.myhealth.va.gov) [www.westpalmbeach.va.gov](http://www.westpalmbeach.va.gov)

**Local VA Connect: 1-561-422-6838**

**Toll Free VA Connect: 1-866-383-9036**

**VA Tel-Care Nurse**

(After 4:30 P.M.): **1-877-741-3400**

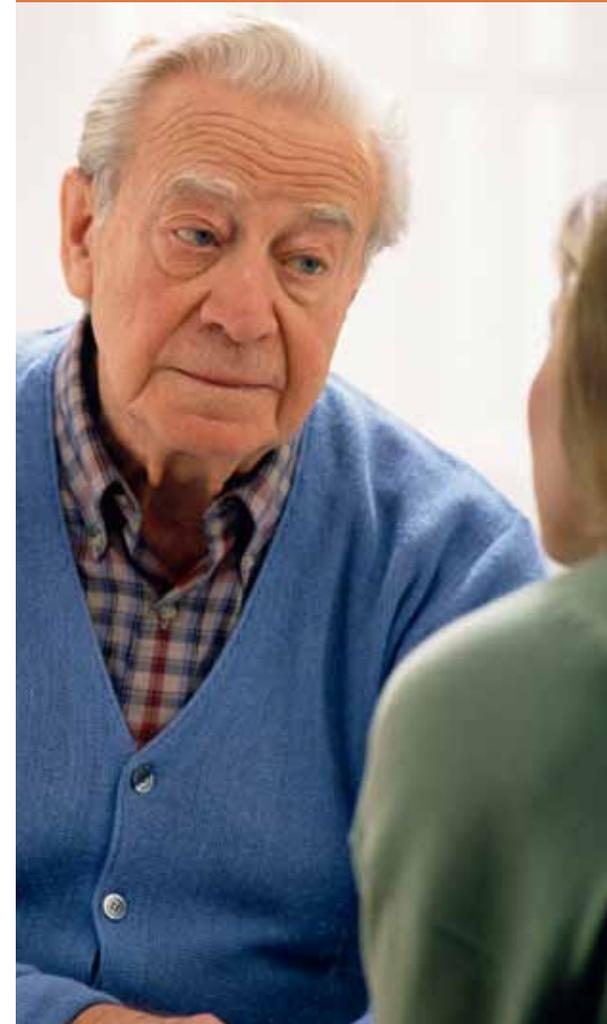
Developed by CDL-CHF 2009

MEDICAL MEDIA JOB # 24203



Department of  
Veterans Affairs

## Instructions for Patients with Heart Failure





## Ask your providers these three simple questions:

1. What is my main problem?
2. What do I need to do?
3. Why is it important for me to do this?

### What is my main problem?

You were diagnosed with heart failure (also known as congestive heart failure or CHF) which occurs when the heart is unable to pump blood effectively throughout the body. It means that the heart is not pumping as strong as it should. As a result, some of the blood that is normally pumped out of your heart backs up into your lungs and to other parts of your body. With chronic heart failure, your body tissues and organs may not get as much blood as they need.

### What do I need to do?

Remember to take your medications as instructed every day. Do not stop taking medications unless otherwise directed by your provider.

You will be treated with a combination of medications for your heart failure. These medications can help to strengthen your heart muscle and prevent it from enlarging further. They can help make you feel better, do more activities, decrease the likelihood you will require hospitalization and may help you live longer.

*You may be taking one or more of the following medications.*

1. These medications help your heart work more efficiently. They may help you live longer.
  - » Lisinopril
  - » Enalapril
  - » Captopril
  - » Losartan
  - » Valsartan
2. These medications act by slowing the heart rate and reducing the workload of the heart. They may help you live longer.
  - » Metoprolol
  - » Carvedilol
3. This medication helps the heart pump more strongly and may also help control irregular heart rhythms.
  - » Digoxin

4. These medications help your body get rid of excess salt and water.
  - » Furosemide
  - » Bumetanide
5. In selected patients, these medications may improve the function of the heart and may help you live longer.
  - » Spironolactone
  - » Eplerenone
  - » Isosorbide/hydralazine

**Do not take any herbal products or over-the-counter medications (ibuprofen, Advil®, Motrin®, naproxen, Aleve®) unless approved by your provider. Your healthcare provider will discuss possible side effects with you.**

- Maintain a low salt /sodium diet (i.e. avoid canned processed foods). Ask a dietitian to help plan your diet.
- Maintain fluid restriction per your provider's instruction.
- Exercise as tolerated and according to your energy level. Limit activities that cause fatigue.
- If you smoke, drink alcohol, or use illegal substances, please quit. These can affect your heart failure and are toxic to your heart. Ask your provider about available programs.
- Keep your pneumonia and flu vaccinations up to date.