After You Go Home—Week 1 for Heart Failure Patients



Before You Leave the Facility:

- Have a follow-up appointment scheduled with your primary care provider.
 - Make sure you know your doctor's phone number, address, and how you will get to the appointment.

Your doctor's information:

Name:	
Phone:	
Address:	

- Have a plan to pick up new medications.
- Make sure you have a scale to weigh yourself, a blood pressure (BP) monitor, and a method to track your heart rate. Your targets:

Weight:	_ BP:
Heart rate:	
Daily sodium:	
Daily fluid goal:	

Daily Tasks:



Medications

• Take your heart failure medications as prescribed.





Diet and Exercise

• Meet your daily sodium and fluid goals.

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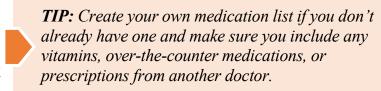
Symptoms and Follow-ups

- Know the symptoms that require a call to your doctor or for immediate help.
- Log and monitor your symptoms daily and note any changes:
 - ✓ Is your **breathing** normal?
 - ✓ Has your **weight** changed?
 - ✓ Do you have any **swelling**?
 - ✓ Has your **heart rate** or **blood pressure** changed?
 - ✓ Do you feel more **tired** or any changes in energy levels?
 - ✓ Are you experiencing **appetite** changes?
 - ✓ Do you have any **nausea**?
 - ✓ Have you noticed **forgetfulness**?

Day 1. The morning after you get home from the facility.



- Review your discharge instructions from the facility.
- Create a daily medication schedule to help you stay on track (think about meal times).



• Review the medication list the facility provided and make sure it is correct.



• Find a notebook to start recording your weight, blood pressure, and heart rate. Write down any questions or observations you have made.

Key:



Medications







Exercise

Day 2. Su M Tu W Th F Sa (Circle the day of the week to keep on track)

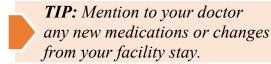


- How are you feeling? Make sure you write down how you feel and share any concerns or questions you have on your follow-up call.
- Explore your pantry and fridge to find food and snacks that are low in sodium. Create a meal plan to help you make healthy choices.

Day 3. Su M Tu W Th F Sa



Have you been taking all of your medications?
If not, what can you do differently? You may need to call the doctor.





• Get up and start moving. Identify an activity that you enjoy doing and that will help you reach your physical activity goals.

Day 4. Su M Tu W Th F Sa



• Look in your notebook and review your symptoms. Have there been any changes over the past few days?



• Reduce your stress. Find a relaxing activity to do each day such as deep breathing exercises, listening to music, solving a crossword puzzle, meditating, or practicing yoga.

Day 5. Su M Tu W Th F Sa



• Check in with your family. Have they noticed any changes such as swelling, confusion, or fatigue?



• Reading and understanding food labels is a vital skill to help manage your heart failure symptoms. Focus on how many milligrams (mg) of sodium is in a serving to meet your recommended target listed on the front page (often less than 2,000 mg per day).

TIP: Common high-sodium foods to avoid: pizza, canned soup, and packaged lunch meats.

Day 6 and 7. Prepare for your follow-up visit on:



- Confirm your appointment with your doctor and make sure you have a plan to get there.
- Plan to share with your doctor if you are having a hard time meeting your medication, diet, and exercise goals. Sharing details with your doctor can help him or her provide additional support and make changes when needed.

Here is a list of things you need to take with you to your appointment:

- 1. A full list of home medications/ vitamins/over-the-counter medications.
- 2. Your notebook where you wrote down your:
 - a. Symptoms
 - b. Side effects
 - c. Questions you have for the doctor
- 3. The discharge paperwork given to you at the facility.
- 1. American Heart Association (AHA). Managing Heart Failure Symptoms. Accessed Oct. 6, 2020. https://www.heart.org/en/health-topics/heart-failure/warning-signs-of-heart-failure/managing-heart-failure-symptoms
- 2. AHA. Communicating With Your Advanced Heart Failure Healthcare Team. Accessed Oct. 6, 2020. https://www.heart.org/en/health-topics/heart-failure/living-with-heart-failure-and-managing-advanced-hf/communicating-with-your-advanced-heart-failure-healthcare-team
- 3. Center for Disease Control and Prevention. Heart Failure. Accessed Oct. 6, 2020. https://www.cdc.gov/heartdisease/heart_failure.htm
- 4. AHA. Understanding Ingredients on Food Labels. Accessed Oct. 6, 2020. https://www.heart.org/en/healthy-living/healthy-eating/eat-smart/nutrition-basics/understanding-ingredients-on-food-labels
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