

Tips to help manage heart failure symptoms

1 Start by eating right



Eat a balanced diet

Eating a balanced diet rich in fruits, vegetables, grains, beans, low-fat dairy, and lean meats is good for your heart health.



Limit salt intake

Processed and packaged foods—including things like cold cuts and canned goods—are often high in salt (sodium). Look for low-sodium versions of your favorite foods.



Watch fluid intake

To avoid excess water retention, your doctor may recommend that you limit fluids, including water. Talk to your doctor about how much liquid is right for you.



Check labels for hidden salt

Check labels closely for other terms for salt (sodium) as well, such as sodium citrate, sodium phosphate, and monosodium glutamate, among others.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS



Avoid or limit alcohol

It is recommended that you avoid or limit alcohol—no more than one drink per day for women and no more than one to two drinks per day for men. Ask your doctor whether it is OK for you to drink alcohol.



Avoid or limit caffeine

It is recommended that you avoid or limit caffeine—no more than a cup or two of coffee a day.



Avoid candy and other sweets

Candy and other sugary treats can be bad for heart health.

2 Monitor yourself



Watch your blood pressure

Keep track of your blood pressure over time and report any changes to your doctor.



Stay on track

Use a daily diary or tracker to note any changes in symptoms, such as fatigue, shortness of breath, blood pressure, or swelling in the body. Share that information with your doctor.



Weigh yourself daily

Make sure you're not retaining too much water. If you gain more than 2 to 3 pounds in a day or more than 5 pounds in a week, talk to your doctor right away.



Schedule and keep your doctor's appointments

Discuss any changes in your symptoms to allow your doctor to adjust your care as needed.



Take your medications as directed

Set reminders on your calendar or phone to help you.

3 Practice self-care



De-stress

Taking 15-20 minutes a day to sit quietly and breathe deeply can reduce stress, which is good for heart health. You may also consider listening to calming music daily.



Take time to rest during the day

Try putting your feet up for a few minutes every couple of hours for relief. Placing stools or chairs around the house can come in handy if you need to take a break.



Get a good night's sleep

Avoid eating too much before bedtime and try using pillows to prop up your head. These tips may help you improve your sleep at night.



Exercise

Daily activity can contribute to your overall health. Talk to your doctor about a plan that's right for you.