Healing Hearts
Living Well with Heart Failure
MaineHealth
www.mainehealth.org
For provider and patient to do during the visit:
1. Review this guide together.
2. Fill in the yellow spaces on this page and other pages.

**Name:** _________________________________________________________________

*With your doctor, fill in all the yellow areas below:*

### MY HEART
- My Heart pumps at ________%.
- I have SYSTOLIC / DIASTOLIC heart failure. (circle one)

### MY SALT
Every day, I should NOT eat more than ________ milligrams of salt (sodium).

### MY FLUIDS
Every day, I should NOT drink more than ________ ounces of fluids.

### MY WATER PILL (DIURETIC)
Name _______________________________

### CONTACT NUMBERS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Phone</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Primary Care Doctor</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Cardiologist</td>
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<tr>
<td>Specialist</td>
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<tr>
<td>Specialist</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### MY WEIGHT

My target weight is ________ pounds.

I will call my doctor if my weight goes UP to ________ pounds or more.
(Use target weight plus 4 pounds if no other amount has been chosen.)

I will call my doctor if my weight goes DOWN to ________ pounds or less.
(Use target weight minus 4 pounds if no other amount has been chosen.)

### QUESTIONS FOR MY DOCTOR

[Blank space for questions]


What is Heart Failure?

- Heart failure is when the heart cannot pump the blood normally.
- It can make you feel weak, tired or dizzy.
- It can cause water to leak out of your blood vessels. This water can get in your lungs and makes you short of breath. It can cause your legs, feet and belly to swell.

- A heart that is working normally fills completely with blood then pumps out 65% of the blood.

- There are two kinds of heart failure:
  1. Systolic: The heart cannot pump blood out well.
  2. Diastolic: The heart does not fill with blood well.

What You Can Do to keep feeling good and to stay out of the hospital:

- Weigh yourself each day
- Check your “Heart Failure Zone” every day
- Take your medicines correctly every day
- Eat the right amount of salt
- Drink the right amount of fluids
- Exercise regularly
Check Your “Heart Failure Zone” Every Day

Heart failure can cause you to feel bad, have swelling and be short of breath. Doing your daily checkup can help you catch these changes quickly so you can take action to feel better and stay out of the hospital.

Each Day:

1. Check how you feel
   - Weigh yourself
   - Are you short of breath?
   - Do you have swelling?

2. Find which Heart Failure Zone you are in using the Heart Failure Zone Chart.
   - Write the date
   - Write your weight in the “Weight” box for that day
   - Mark the zone you are in (green, yellow or red)
Heart Failure Zone Chart

Write your weight and zone on the back of this page every day.

My target weight is ________ pounds.

Every day, I will use this chart to check my weight, swelling, breathing, and energy level. I will take action if ONE or MORE of these is in the yellow or red zone.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Green Zone</th>
<th>Yellow Zone</th>
<th>Red Zone</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>You are doing OK and in control.</td>
<td>Take action—call today.</td>
<td>Take action—call NOW!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No change in my weight.</td>
<td>My weight is ________ pounds or more.</td>
<td>My weight is ________ pounds or more.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My weight is ________ pounds or less.</td>
<td></td>
<td>My weight is ________ pounds or less.</td>
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<tr>
<td>I do not have swelling.</td>
<td>I have swelling in my:</td>
<td>I have swelling in my:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• foot, ankle or shin</td>
<td>• belly, I feel boated or pants are tighter</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• knee or thigh</td>
<td>• hands or face</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I do not feel short of breath.</td>
<td>I feel short of breath or cough while:</td>
<td>I feel short of breath or wheeze at rest.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Breathing is normal.</td>
<td>• walking or talking</td>
<td>I feel less alert.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sleep is normal.</td>
<td>• eating</td>
<td>I need to sleep sitting up to breathe.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• bathing or dressing</td>
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<td></td>
<td>I need to use more pillows when I sleep.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>My energy level is normal.</td>
<td>I am too tired to do most of my normal activities.</td>
<td>I am so tired that I can hardly do any of my normal activities.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Tear this page out and keep it next to your scale.
**Daily Weight and Zone Log**

**Check your weight and heart failure zone every day.**

Write your weight each day and mark the zone you are in (instructions on other side of this page). Tear this page out and keep it near your scale. Bring it when you visit your doctor.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Weight</th>
<th>My Zone (√)</th>
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<tr>
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</table>

I will call my doctor if my weight goes **UP** to ______ pounds or more. (Use target weight plus 4 pounds if no other amount has been chosen.)

I will call my doctor if my weight goes **DOWN** to ______ pounds or less. (Use target weight minus 4 pounds if no other amount has been chosen.)

For more copies of this chart you can make color photocopies, go to www.mainehealth.org/hf and print your own, ask your doctor or nurse to make copies, or make your own using a calendar.
# Water Pill Guide

Please fill out this form together with your doctor.

My target weight is ______ pounds.

My Water Pill name and strength is ______________________________ mg.

If I am in the **YELLOW ZONE** or **RED ZONE** I will call:

Call Dr.  ____________________________  Phone  ____________________________

If symptoms are **severe I will call 911** or go to the emergency room.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Weight</th>
<th>Number of pills in morning</th>
<th>Number of pills in afternoon</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Red Zone**
Take action—call your doctor NOW!
If symptoms are severe **call 911** or go to the emergency room.

**Yellow Zone**
Take action—call your doctor today.

**Green Zone**
You are in control.
This is your Target Weight.
You are doing OK and are in control.

**Yellow Zone**
Take action—call your doctor today.

**Red Zone**
Take action—call your doctor NOW!
If symptoms are severe **call 911** or go to the emergency room.

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Tear this sheet out and keep it near your medicines.
Bring this sheet to your doctor visits along with a list of all your medicines.

Doctor: Please see other side for instructions on using this “Water Pill Guide.”
Guidance for Provider

This “Water Pill Guide” is intended as a patient self-management and teaching tool to help patients better manage their disease. Following your guidance appropriate patients can take a more active role in adjusting diuretic medications.

The goal is to help patients respond appropriately to weight changes as a sign of fluid retention or fluid loss by increasing or decreasing their dosage of diuretic medication (analogous to diabetes patients adjusting insulin).

You will also use this guide to help patients understand when it is appropriate to call your office for guidance.

Instructions:
1. Enter patient’s target weight*, medication name and strength at top of guide.
2. Enter provider name and phone number for patient to call.
3. Enter incremental weights**, above and below target weight, where you feel the patient should take action.
4. Enter the adjusted medication doses that you recommend at each of those weights above and below target weight.
5. Add any additional instructions (e.g., add metolazone at a certain threshold).

* TARGET WEIGHT
This is the weight at which the patient is stable on appropriate medications.

**INCREMENTAL WEIGHTS
(e.g., increments from target weight might be +/- 3, 4, 6, 8, 10 pounds)

Note: All these materials available at www.mainehealth.org/hf.
How to Weigh Yourself Each Day

1. Get a good bathroom scale.
   Tell your doctor or nurse if you cannot afford to buy a scale – they may be able to help you get a scale.

2. Weigh yourself each morning:
   After you go to the bathroom, before you eat breakfast, and before you get dressed.

3. Know your target weight
   Ask your doctor what your target weight is each time you visit. Your target weight is where your heart is working best.
   Staying close to your target weight will help you feel better and stay out of the hospital.

My target weight is ________ pounds.

I will call my doctor if my weight goes UP to ________ pounds or more.
(Use target weight plus 4 pounds if no other amount has been chosen.)

I will call my doctor if my weight goes DOWN to ________ pounds or less.
(Use target weight minus 4 pounds if no other amount has been chosen.)
How to Take Your Medicines

Taking your medicines the way your doctor or nurse told you is important. Heart failure medicines help your heart pump better and can help you feel better and live longer.

Take your medicines

- Take each of your medicines, every day, at the right times
- Do not skip doses of your medicines, even when you feel good
- Don’t stop taking your medicines. If you think you are having side effects from your medicines, talk to your doctor right away.
- If you are having trouble paying for your medicine, talk to your doctor. To speak with others who can help you, call:
  • MedAccess 1-877-275-1787
  • Consumers for Affordable Healthcare 1-800-965-7476

Patients who take their medicines as the doctor said live longer, feel better and spend less time in the hospital.
Don’t run out of pills

- Make sure you always have enough medicine left in your pill bottles. Don’t let your medicine bottles run out.
- Check the number of refills you have left every time you pick up your medicine bottles. If the label says **No Refills** or **Refills: 0**, call your doctor right away to get more refills.
- Get all your pills from the same pharmacy every time.

Make a Plan

A plan will help you remember when to take your medicines every day.

- Keep an updated list of your medicines that says how many pills to take and when to take them.
- Keep all your medicines in one place—maybe next to your toothbrush, at your bedside, or in the kitchen.
- Some people use a pill box to hold their pills for each day of the week. This can help you remember if you have taken your pills that day.
- If you are going out of the house for a long time, bring enough medicine with you.
Partner With Your Doctor to Manage Your Medicines

What To Do
- Bring all of your pill bottles and your medicine list to each doctor visit.
- Show your doctor how and when you take your pills.

Why To Do It
- This will help your doctor decide if you should stop or change any of your pills.
- This way you and your doctor can work together to keep you safe and make sure you don’t run out of pills.
Other Things to Know About Your Medicines

- Generic medicines cost less and are as effective as brand-name medicines.
- Keep an updated list of your medicines and allergies with you at all times.

Vitamins, other drugs and health food supplements:

- Talk with your doctor before you take any other medicines, drugs or supplements.
- Some of these may cause problems with your medicines or may be harmful.
- Even drugs like aspirin, Tylenol, Motrin, Aleve, ibuprofen, vitamins and cold medicines, herbs and supplements and many others might cause problems with your medicines.
How to Eat the Right Amount of Salt

Salt is also called “sodium” and is found in many foods.

Many foods you eat have salt even if you can’t see it or taste it or you have not added it yourself.

Choose foods that are low in salt.

Don’t add salt when you cook.

Take the salt shaker off the table.

Take in between 2000 and 2500 milligrams (mg) of sodium each day unless your doctor recommends a different amount for you.

Eating the right amount of salt will help you feel better.

Salt makes your body hold water, sort of like a sponge.

Eating too much salt can make your legs, feet and belly swell up and make you hold water in your lungs, making you short of breath.

Low salt does not mean no salt. Your body and heart need some salt to work normally.

Remember

Most of the sodium we eat comes from prepared or packaged foods and eating out. Fresh foods are naturally low in sodium.
When you eat at home:
- Don’t add salt to food when you cook or eat.
- Season foods with herbs, vinegar, lemon juice and seasonings with no salt.
- Make your own or choose low-salt sauces, salad dressings, breads and desserts.
- Avoid “instant” foods that come in a bag or box.
- Rinse canned foods (even canned fish) before cooking and eating them.

When you eat out:
- Ask for food cooked with no salt.
- Avoid butter, cheese and sauces.
- Avoid fried foods—choose grilled, baked or steamed foods.
- Choose oil and vinegar or lemon juice as salad dressing.
- Avoid or limit fast food.
- Avoid bacon, sausage, ham, hot dogs, bologna and other deli meats.
CHOOSE these low-salt foods:

- Fruit
- Fresh Fish
- Fresh Meats
- Yogurt
- Frozen Vegetables
- Lemon, Olive Oil and Vinegar
- Dried Beans
- Fresh Vegetables
- Unsalted Margarine
- Whole oats
- Graham Crackers
- Eggs
AVOID or LIMIT these high-salt foods:

- Fast Food
- Frozen Meals
- Hot Dogs, Bacon, Smoked Meat
- Pizza
- Cheese
- Canned Beans and Vegetables
- Instant Hot Cereals
- Canned Or Potted Meat
- Sauces and Dressings
- Snack Foods
- Canned and Smoked Fish
- Canned Soup
Reading a Food Label

There are many hidden sources of salt in the foods we eat, so it is important to read food labels.

**SAMPLE FOOD LABEL**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nutrition Facts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Serving Size</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Servings Per Container</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Amount Per Serving**

- **Calories:** 20
- **Total Fat:** 0g
- **Sodium:** 30mg
- **Total Carbohydrate:** 4g
  - Dietary Fiber: 2g
  - Sugars: 2g
- **Protein:** 1g

- **Vitamin A:** 4%
- **Vitamin C:** 4%
- **Calcium:** 2%
- **Iron:** 0%

*Not a significant source of calories from fat, saturated fat, trans fat, cholesterol.*

*Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet.*

**STEP 1**
Look at the serving size

**STEP 2**
Look at the sodium per serving

This food has 30mg of sodium in ½ cup.

This food is a good choice!

Watch how much you eat.

- Choose foods called:
  - Low sodium
  - No salt added
  - Sodium free

- Count your mg of sodium as the day goes on.

- Take in between 2000 and 2500 milligrams (mg) of sodium each day unless your doctor recommends a different amount for you.
Drink the Right Amount of Liquids

Your doctor may recommend that you limit how much fluid you drink each day. Balancing how much you drink, along with reducing salt, can help you feel better. This is especially important if you take heart failure medicine and still have swelling or are short of breath. Extra fluid causes more work for your heart.

To lose extra fluid, you need to drink less and pee more.

Fluids include water, juice, milk, soup, ice cream, and more. Anything with fluid in it can count. (Remember: Do not drink alcohol!)

How to keep track of how much you drink each day

- Keep two 1-quart (or 32 ounce) pitchers handy in the kitchen.
- Start with the pitchers empty each day.
- Each time you have a drink, pour that same amount of water into the pitchers.
- When the pitchers start to get full, it is time to limit the amount you drink that day.
Exercising is Important!

Why should I exercise?

- Being more active is one of the best things you can do for your heart failure.
- Being fit makes less work for your heart.
- Moving more can help you have more energy and feel more upbeat.

Ways you can exercise:

- Walk—it is easy, fun and free.
- Mow the lawn, work in the garden.
- Use a stationary bike.
- Go to an exercise class.
- Sweep, vacuum or dust.
- Exercise with a friend or a partner.

Be safe

- Start slowly, with 10 minutes a day. Your body needs time to build endurance!
- Know that routine exercise WILL get easier.
- Talk to your doctor to make a plan that is right for you.

Important!

If you have any of these symptoms that do not go away with rest, call 911.

- chest pain
- severe shortness of breath
- dizziness

Talk with your doctor about any changes in how you feel when you exercise.
What About Tobacco and Alcohol?

 Quitting TODAY is the most important thing you can do for your heart.

Don’t smoke or use tobacco products

- Smoking, secondhand smoke and other tobacco products make your heart and lungs work harder.
- If you smoke, talk to your doctor or nurse about getting help to quit.

You can get help to quit from the Maine Tobacco Helpline, 1-800-207-1230.

Do not drink any alcohol

- Drinking alcohol can weaken your heart.

1-800-207-1230
What Else Will Help Me Live Well With Heart Failure?

Keep your doctors’ visits
Be sure to keep all your doctors’ appointments and partner with your doctor to plan your care.

- By learning more about heart failure, you and your doctor can better manage your care.
- When you see the doctor, bring a list of your medications and your weight records.
- Keep your doctors’ visits even when you are feeling well.

Get a flu shot

- Get a flu shot every year and pneumonia shots as directed by your doctor.
- When you have heart failure, the flu can be deadly.
- A flu shot will help you to not get the flu.

Take control of your healthcare choices

- Talk to your family and your doctor about medical treatments that you might want or might not want if you become very ill.
- Advance Directives and Living Wills are ways to let your family and your doctor know what you want.

To find out more about:

- Emotions and your heart
- Sexual activity and your heart
- Heart health resources, including local, state, national and on the internet

Go to www.mainehealth.org/hf
To learn more about other treatment options for advanced heart failure, such as defibrillators, heart pumps, and heart transplant, call the Maine Medical Center Heart Failure Program at 207-662-4824.

More information on heart failure is available at www.mainehealth.org/hf.

**Know what your pills do for you**

You will be taking medications as part of your heart failure treatment. Some of these medications can make you live longer and improve your heart function. Other medications are to make you feel better.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Kind of Medication</strong></th>
<th><strong>What it Does</strong></th>
<th><strong>Common Names</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Angiotensin Converting Enzyme Inhibitors (ACE-I’s) and Angiotensin Receptor Blockers (ARB’s)</td>
<td>Help your heart return to a normal shape so it can work better</td>
<td>Lisinopril, Enalapril, Losartan, Valsartan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beta-Blockers</td>
<td>Lower your heart rate and blood pressure to make less work for your heart. Make your heart pump better to help you live longer</td>
<td>Carvedilol, Metoprolol, Bisoprolol</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water Pills, also called diuretics</td>
<td>Help you feel better by making you “pee” (urinate) more, to get rid of extra salt and water</td>
<td>Furosemide (Lasix), Bumetanide, Torsemide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aldosterone Antagonists</td>
<td>Help you live longer</td>
<td>Spironolactone, Eplerenone</td>
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This guide is designed to help you and your family better manage heart failure.

The goal of the MaineHealth Heart Failure Program is to help patients with heart failure have better health outcomes by supporting better patient care, education and support.

Thank you to the MaineHealth Heart Failure and Healing Hearts at Home Workgroups and especially the leadership of Dr. Joseph Wight, Dr. Esther Shao and Maryanna Arsenault.

Special thanks to the University of North Carolina and their partners for permitting use of elements of their publication “Caring for Your Heart, Living Well with Heart Failure” in the development of this publication.

To download weight log and diuretic card go to www.mainehealth.org/hf.

Other education guides and tracking tools are also available there.