My GENESIS
GUIDE FOR LIVING WITH HEART FAILURE
Living with heart failure...

While this booklet is directed toward people with heart failure, those with other heart conditions may benefit from the information provided.

What is Heart Failure?
The heart is a muscle. It pumps oxygen rich blood to all parts of the body. When your heart is not working properly, it cannot pump enough blood to maintain normal function to the rest of the body. Some symptoms you may experience are difficulty breathing, body swelling and weight gain.

CAUSES OF HEART FAILURE
There are many causes of heart failure. Some of them are:
• High blood pressure
• Coronary Artery Disease
• Diabetes
• Valvular Heart Disease
• Obesity

SYMPTOMS
Symptoms of heart failure are:
• Sudden weight gain
• Problems breathing when resting or when active
• Problems breathing when lying down flat
• Swollen ankles, legs, or stomach/belly (sometimes called “edema”)
• Feeling weak and tired - not able to do what you normally do
• Loss of appetite
• Dry, hacking cough

WHAT IS EJECTION FRACTION?
Ejection Fraction (EF) measures how much blood the heart pumps out (ejects) with each heart beat and is used to help diagnose heart failure. An ejection fraction of 50% or more is considered normal.
**TYPES OF HEART FAILURE**

There are different types of heart failure. All affect the heart’s ability to pump blood from the pumping chambers (ventricles) of the heart.

You may have one or more types. Following the steps in this booklet will help you feel better no matter what type of heart failure you have.

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**SYSTOLIC HEART FAILURE**
- Heart muscle weakens
- Pumping chambers enlarge
- Less oxygen-rich blood pumped out of heart
- Ejection fraction is lower than normal (less than 50%).

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**DIASTOLIC HEART FAILURE**
- Heart muscle stiffens
- Pumping chambers can’t relax normally
- Pumping chambers can’t fill with blood properly
- Ejection Fraction is often in the normal range (greater than 50%)

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**RIGHT SIDED HEART FAILURE**
- The right ventricle weakens and cannot pump properly
- Less blood is pumped out of the heart and into the lungs to receive oxygen
- Blood can back up into the body, which can cause swelling and difficulty breathing

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**VALVE DISEASE**
- There are 4 heart valves that help the blood flow forward through the heart
- When the valves do not work correctly the blood can begin to back up through the heart and into the body
- This may cause symptoms of heart failure
CAN HEART FAILURE BE MANAGED? YES!
Although heart failure is a disease that will not go away, it can be managed so you can continue to live your life.

Heart failure can be managed with:
• Medications  • Procedures  • Surgery  • Diet and Exercise

Be sure to talk to your doctor to see what is the right kind of treatment for you.

ASK ME!

What are my symptoms of heart failure?
___________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________

Why is it important to watch for the symptoms of heart failure?
___________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________

SIX STEPS FOR A HEALTHY HEART

Patients like you have an important part in keeping yourself feeling good and out of the hospital. People with heart failure can live happy lives for many years by following these 6 steps:

STEP 1: Take the medications your doctor orders for you
STEP 2: Go to your doctor appointments
STEP 3: Monitor your symptoms and weight daily
STEP 4: Watch what you eat and drink
STEP 5: Get exercise as directed
STEP 6: Limit alcohol and caffeine and do not use tobacco
Following the Steps

**STEP 1:**

**TAKE YOUR MEDICATIONS**

It is important to take your medications just like your doctor told you.

Your medicines may change after each doctor appointment, or when you are in the hospital.

It can be confusing, so keeping a list is very important. Be sure to share this list with all of your doctors and bring it to all of your appointments.

NOTE: Be sure to talk to your doctor before taking any other medicines; even over-the-counter medicines, herbal products, or vitamins.

Patients who take their medicines as prescribed live longer, feel better, and spend less time in the hospital.

**DIURETICS (WATER PILLS)**

**MY DIURETIC IS:**

- Diuretics are often called “water pills.”
- With heart failure extra fluids can build up in your body, including your lungs.
- Diuretics help your kidneys get rid of extra fluid.
- Getting rid of the extra fluid in your lungs will help you breathe easier.

- Some diuretics cause potassium to be lost in your urine. Your doctor may tell you to take potassium if you are taking some types of diuretics.
- You may need a blood test to be sure your body has the right amount of potassium.

Taking your diuretic and avoiding salty foods will help keep extra fluid from building up in your body.

**ACE INHIBITORS (ANGIOTENSIN-CONVERTING ENZYME)**

**MY ACE INHIBITOR IS:**

- ACE inhibitors relax blood vessels so your heart does not need to work as hard to pump blood.
- By making your heart work more easily, they improve symptoms and may keep heart failure from getting worse.
- When you start taking an ACE inhibitor you may feel weak or dizzy. Stand up slowly if you are having this problem. Call your doctor if you have a fainting spell.
- A few people have a dry cough when they start taking an ACE inhibitor. Call your doctor if it does not go away. Do not stop your medication because of a cough until you talk to your doctor or pharmacist.

**ASK ME!**

What is the name of my water pill?

______________________________________________
ARBS (ANGIOTENSIN II RECEPTOR BLOCKERS) AND VASODILATORS
MY ARB AND/OR VASODILATOR IS:

ARBs or vasodilators help relax your blood vessels and keep heart failure from getting worse.

BETA-BLOCKERS AND ALPHA-BLOCKERS
MY BETA-BLOCKER AND/OR ALPHA-BLOCKER IS:

• Beta and alpha blocker drugs help your blood vessels relax and slow your heart beat down.
• It may take 2 to 3 months before you notice an improvement in symptoms.
• You may notice side effects such as holding fluid, feeling more tired, a slower heartbeat, or dizziness when you first begin taking this medication.
• Call your doctor if you are having these symptoms.

No matter how well you feel, do not stop taking any of your medicines without talking to your doctor!
Taking the right medications can help you feel better and live longer!

STEP 2:
GO TO YOUR DOCTOR APPOINTMENTS

Do not be afraid to talk to your doctor or other people in the office about any questions or concerns you may have. Always ask someone if you don’t understand something, or if you feel something is “just not right.” Your doctors and nurses are there to help and support you.

Tips to follow:
• Set up a doctor appointment before you leave the hospital or other care facility on the best day and time for you.
• Make sure you have a ride to your appointments.
• GO TO ALL OF YOUR SCHEDULED APPOINTMENTS.
• Bring a friend or family member.
• Bring all medications or an up to date medication list to all doctor appointments.
• Ask questions!

Heart failure is not simple. Seeing your doctor frequently will help you stay well.

ASK ME!

Why is it important for me to take my medicine for heart failure every day?

ADAPTED FROM LEHIGH VALLEY HEALTH NETWORK TEACH BACK QUESTIONS
STEP 3: MONITOR YOUR SYMPTOMS

Keep track of how you feel, and look for these symptoms:

• Sudden weight gain
• Problems breathing when resting or when active
• Problems breathing when lying down flat
• Swollen ankles, legs, or stomach/belly (sometimes called “edema”)
• Feeling weak and tired - not able to do what you normally do
• Loss of appetite
• Dry, hacking cough

Be sure to keep your Genesis Heart Failure Zones handy to know what to do if you have changes in your symptoms or weight.

WEIGH DAILY AND RECORD

Remember to:

• Weigh yourself every morning at about the same time
  o After urinating
  o Before having anything to eat or drink
  o Wearing the same amount of clothing
  o Using the same scale

Write your weight down EVERYDAY using a chart or on a calendar.

• This is important because weight gain from fluid can begin up to 2 weeks before you feel other symptoms
• Take your weight chart to doctor appointments

Call your doctor when you gain:

• 3 pounds in one day OR
• 5 pounds in one week
Following the Steps

ASK ME!

What weight gain should I call my doctor about?
________________________________________________________________________

Why is it important to weigh myself and watch for symptoms of heart failure every day?
________________________________________________________________________

HEART FAILURE ZONES

Monitoring your symptoms will help you notice problems with your heart failure. You should let your doctor know before they become worse.

Some problems to look for are shown on your Heart Failure Zones for Management handout. Use this to help you know what to do if how you feel changes.

If you did not receive this handout, please let us know so we can get one to you.
STEP 4:
WATCH DIET AND FLUIDS
(WHAT YOU EAT AND DRINK)

SODIUM is a part of SALT and is found in most foods you eat.

Why do you need to limit the salt (sodium) in your diet?
Salt acts like a sponge and makes your body hold onto water. Eating too much salt can cause you to gain weight, make your legs swell and causes water to go to your lungs, making it harder to breathe.

How much salt (sodium) can you have each day?
Doctors recommend that you eat less than 2000 mg of sodium each day. You can do this by taking the salt shaker off the table and watching which kinds of food you eat.

TABLE SALT AND SEA SALT ARE MADE OF SODIUM

It is good to select foods with no more than 140 mg of sodium per serving. Foods with more than 300 mg of sodium per serving may not fit into your reduced sodium meal plan.

It is important that you read food labels to find out the sodium content of foods. It may also be helpful to know that the government ruled some words used on labels must mean what they say. See chart for key words and what they mean.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>KEY WORDS</th>
<th>MEANING</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sodium Free (or salt free)</td>
<td>Very little salt (less than 5 mg per serving)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very low sodium</td>
<td>35 mg sodium or less per serving</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low Sodium</td>
<td>140 mg sodium or less per serving</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less Sodium</td>
<td>20% sodium reduction from original</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reduced Sodium</td>
<td>At least 25% reduction from the original</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Light in Sodium</td>
<td>50% sodium reduction from the original</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unsalted/ Without added salt</td>
<td>No salt added during process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No salt added</td>
<td>No salt added during process</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
READING A NUTRITION LABEL

Below is an example of a nutrition label. Always check to see how many servings are in the box or can. If you eat a portion larger than the serving size, you end up eating more salt than is listed on the label.

**Nutrition Facts**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Amount Per Serving</th>
<th>Calories 250</th>
<th>% Daily Value*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Fat 14g</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saturated Fat 9g</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cholesterol 55mg</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sodium 75mg</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Carbohydrate 26g</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dietary Fiber 0g</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sugars 26g</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protein 4g</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Vitamin A 10%  Vitamin C 0%
Calcium 10%  Iron 0%

LIMIT the amount of sodium you eat and aim for less than 2000 mg each day. Sodium is found in many foods, in addition to the salt you may add to your foods.

1 teaspoon salt = 2,300 mg sodium

Your doctor may set a more specific goal for your sodium restriction.

MY SODIUM RESTRICTION IS

TIPS TO KEEP YOU EATING HEALTHY:

- Don’t add salt to your food at the table.
- If you eat out, choose heart healthy foods. A few suggestions are:
  - Order baked or broiled foods (chicken, fish and steamed vegetables)
  - Ask for a salad dressing, sauce or gravy on the side

These foods should be avoided or limited:

- Canned foods/soups/canned meats
- Crackers with salted tops or seasonings
- Frozen Dinners with more than 500 mg sodium
- Ham, bacon, sausages
- Luncheon meats, hot dogs, pizza
- Instant convenience rice, noodles, potatoes
- Pickles, olives, sauerkraut, salad dressing
- Processed cheeses (American), Cheese spreads
- Tomato juices, jars, canned, or pasta sauces
- Snack foods, salted chips, pretzels, popcorn
- Sauces: soy, steak, Worcestershire, teriyaki, meat tenderizers
- Table Salt, Sea Salt, Seasonings with salt, MSG
DRINKING TOO MANY FLUIDS?
If your doctor tells you to limit your fluids remember this means any drink, not just water. Be sure to count anything liquid such as soda pop, coffee, milk, or soup. Your doctor may set a specific goal for your fluid restriction.

MY FLUID RESTRICTION IS

How much is a milliliter (mL)?

1 oz = 30mL

2 liter of pop = 2,000mL
12oz pop can = 360mL
1 cup = 8oz = 240mL

ASK ME!

What foods should I avoid?

____________________________
____________________________
____________________________

Why is it important to avoid foods with sodium (salt)?

____________________________
____________________________

ADAPTED FROM LEHIGH VALLEY HEALTH NETWORK TEACH BACK QUESTIONS
STEP 5: EXERCISING AND KEEPING ACTIVE

In general, exercising, having sex, and driving are OK.

Make sure to talk to your doctor about what kind of exercise is safe or good for you. Write down the exercise goals your doctor suggests and follow this schedule.

Tips to follow for exercising and having sex:
• Follow the treatment plan your doctor gives you
• Wait at least one hour after eating before exercising or having sex
• Stop and rest for a while if you get tired or have a problem
• Pace yourself
• Choose a time when you feel your best

STEP 6: LIMIT ALCOHOL AND CAFFEINE

ALCOHOL
If you are allowed to drink alcohol, have no more than:
• 2 drinks a day (for men)
• 1 drink a day (for women)

One drink is:
• 1½ shot glasses of 80 proof or 1 shot glass of 100 proof alcohol
• 5 oz. glass of wine
• 12 oz. bottle of beer

Alcohol can make your heart failure worse. It can also affect your medicines.

CAFFEINE
Caffeine is usually OK in moderation (always check with your doctor). If allowed, have no more than:
• 1 or 2 cups per day (coffee, tea, cola, or other caffeinated drinks)

STOP TOBACCO USE
If you smoke (cigarettes or cigars), please try to STOP!
• It is bad for anyone, but especially for those with heart failure
• It makes the heart work harder
• It can lead to heart attacks

Ask your doctor or nurse about help to quit smoking.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>ASK ME!</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How will I remember to take my water pill every day?</td>
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<tr>
<td>How do I plan to change to a low-sodium (salt) diet?</td>
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<tr>
<td>How will I check for heart failure symptoms every day?</td>
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<tr>
<td>How will I weigh myself every day?</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>What is my plan to stop tobacco use?</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>How will I increase my activity level?</td>
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</table>
MAKE THESE 6 STEPS A PERMANENT PART OF YOUR LIFE!

Write down any problems you are having or questions you would like to ask your doctor or nurse. Remember to bring them with you to your doctor appointments to get some answers.

Things that are hard for me and questions I have are:

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IMPORTANT NAMES AND NUMBERS:

My primary care (general health) provider is: ______________________________
Telephone: _____________________________________________________________

My cardiologist (heart care provider) is: _________________________________
Telephone: _____________________________________________________________

My cardiac rehabilitation center is: _____________________________________
Telephone: _____________________________________________________________

My visiting nurse service is: ___________________________________________
Telephone: _____________________________________________________________

OTHER NAMES AND NUMBERS

Name: _________________________________________________________________
Telephone: _____________________________________________________________