

# Managing Heart Failure and Preventing Hospital Stays



## What is heart failure?

Heart failure is a lifelong condition in which the heart muscle can't pump enough blood to meet the body's needs for blood and oxygen. Heart failure symptoms may include<sup>1</sup>:

- Shortness of breath with activity or when lying down
- Fatigue and weakness
- Swelling in the legs, ankles, and feet
- Rapid or irregular heartbeat
- Reduced ability to exercise
- Wheezing
- A cough that doesn't go away or a cough that brings up white or pink mucus with spots of blood<sup>2</sup>

## Healthy Reminders

Heart failure may be managed through the following healthy habits:

- Eating healthy
- Increasing physical activity
- Taking medication(s) on time, as prescribed
- Practicing self-care
- Balancing a healthy weight
- No smoking
- Reducing alcohol consumption
- Keeping your blood sugar under control
- Following doctor's orders

## At this visit, your doctor can:

- Determine why you were admitted to the hospital.
- Diagnose any new health problems and reevaluate existing conditions.
- Review old and new medications.
- Refill medications, if needed.
- Answer any of your health-related questions.
- Talk to you about your health and your treatment plan.

## Getting Back to Your Best Health

After a hospital or emergency room (ER) visit, recovery can be challenging. There are many things you can do to manage your recovery. The most important is scheduling a follow-up visit with your doctor within seven days after a hospital or ER visit, unless otherwise directed.

*You should have a follow-up visit with your primary care doctor within seven days of being released from the hospital. Your clinical team will try to call or contact you after you are discharged to help schedule this visit. It is helpful to bring a list of all current medications and your hospital discharge documentation to your follow-up visit.*

## We're Here to Help

Your doctor may have prescribed new medications, follow-up treatment, or encouraged you to make lifestyle changes. We want to help you navigate these changes through your recovery and beyond. ***Our care management team has resources that can help you reach your health goals.***

Following your ER visit or hospitalization, your care manager can help you with many things, including scheduling your follow-up appointments and transportation assistance. They can also help keep track of your medication and help you manage multiple conditions. Annual wellness visits, virtual visits, and digital care management opportunities with your care manager are available upon request.

**To learn more, or to sign up for our Case Management program, call us at 1-877-617-0390 (TTY: 1-877-617-0392).**

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.heart.org/en/health-topics/heart-failure/what-is-heart-failure>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/heart-failure/symptoms-causes/syc-20373142>