

Monitoring Symptoms of Heart Failure

One of the most important things you can do to help your heart failure is pay careful attention to your symptoms every day.

Any change in your symptoms, or new symptoms, could mean your condition is changing and you need to call your healthcare provider. It's important to weigh yourself every day and keep a daily journal of your weight.

Any sudden weight gain means your body might be retaining fluid. This could be a signal that your heart failure is getting worse. You should weigh yourself at the same time each day. Use the same scale for all your weigh-ins. And wear the same amount of clothing each time. Call your healthcare provider immediately if you gain 2-3 pounds or more in a 24-hour period or 5 pounds in 1 week.

Swelling is also an important symptom to watch for. Look for swelling, also called edema, in your lower body such as your legs, ankles, feet, lower back, stomach, and hands each day. If you have sudden or severe swelling, you should let your healthcare provider know right away.

Fatigue is another symptom of heart failure. Be aware if you are becoming tired more easily, especially if it seems connected to physical activity like walking or climbing stairs.

Usually just tired, weak, weak feeling. Sometimes my blood pressure will drop low, so I don't have much energy in that.

And if you experience any confusion, dizziness, or lightheadedness, let your healthcare provider know right away. You should also write it down in your journal. Be sure to include the time, date, and what you were doing.

Bring your journal to your next healthcare appointment so you can discuss it with your healthcare provider. If you notice an increase in any other of your symptoms of heart failure like shortness of breath, a cough, increased heart rate or fatigue, don't panic.

Call your healthcare providers and let them know what is going on as soon as possible. They can help you manage these symptoms.

Common symptoms of heart failure include: Edema or swelling in the lungs, legs, ankles, feet, and waist; sudden weight gain of more than 2-3 pounds in a 24-hour period or 5 pounds in 1 week; fatigue; confusion; shortness of breath; cough; increased heart rate; and an increased thirst.

By monitoring your symptoms on a daily basis, you can reduce the daily effects heart failure symptoms have on your life and help you stay out of the hospital.