

Tips for living with heart failure

Top tips your doctor may recommend



Follow a low-salt, low-cholesterol diet.

Many doctors recommend the Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension (DASH) eating plan, which offers guidelines, menus, and even heart-healthy recipes that taste good. Some doctors have copies on hand. You can also download a copy at the [National Institutes of Health website](#).



Get more exercise to build up your strength and fitness level.

Even people with severe heart failure symptoms can benefit from the right kind of exercise. Ask your doctor about cardiac rehabilitation programs, where trained fitness professionals can coach you on getting started slowly and safely based on your condition. These programs are sometimes covered by health insurance for patients with heart failure.



Lose weight, if needed.

Getting more active and joining a weight-loss support group can make it easier to meet this goal. Ask your doctor or nurse to suggest programs that may help.

Even before you see big changes on the outside, a better diet and more activity can lead to great improvements on the inside.



Quit smoking.

Your odds of quitting are much higher if you enlist some help. Ask your doctor about approaches, possibly including medications, that may make it easier to kick the habit. Finding a support group or counselor can also help. For one in your area, call the National Network of Tobacco Cessation Quitlines at 1-800-QUIT-NOW.