

HEART FAILURE: ACTION PLAN

Every CHF patient should have an action plan that includes daily monitoring and steps for getting emergency care quickly in the event of severe symptoms. The action plan should consist of the following:

Every Day Action Plan

- Weigh myself in the morning and record weight
- Take my medications as prescribed
- Avoid salt, and salty foods
- Stay active; take a walk

All Clear – My symptoms are under control

- No shortness of breath
- No weight gain No swelling of feet, ankles, legs or stomach
- No dizziness or chest pain

Caution – Warning Zone: Call My Doctor

- **NEW, MORE** or **WORSE** dry coughing
- Shortness of breath
- **NEW** dizziness
- **MORE** swelling in your feet, ankles, stomach or legs
- **MORE** tired than usual. No energy.
- Uneasy, if I know something is not right
- I **GAIN** more than ___ pounds in a day or
- I **GAIN** ___ or more in a week
- I am using **MORE** pillows at night
- It is harder to breathe when lying down and I need to sleep in a chair

Emergency – Medical Alert – call 911

- Unrelieved shortness of breath—shortness of breath at rest
- Unrelieved chest pain
- Wheezing or chest tightness at rest
- Fainting

Things to always have on hand:

- Contact information for doctor, hospital, therapists, pharmacists, ambulance, and friends or family who can help in an emergency.
- Written directions to the doctor's office, clinic, or hospital. You may not be able to talk easily, so giving directions will be difficult.
- Medications and what dosages to take under specific circumstances
- Insurance company cards or at least names and policy numbers

This action plan should be developed with the help of your physician, after a full assessment of the following:

- Availability and response times of ambulances
- Availability of friends and family who can drive in an emergency
- Proximity to an ER or doctor's office
- Availability of relatives or friends who can stay with the patient until the patient improves or a visit to the doctor is decided on

After this assessment, you can develop an action plan with your doctor and determine the appropriate treatment steps for signs and symptoms of respiratory difficulty, chest pain, or increased leg swelling.

Family members and those that are close to you should be informed and participate in this emergency action plan.



Penn Medicine

To speak to a Penn specialist about scheduling a consultation or second opinion for heart failure, please call **800-789-PENN (7366)**.