



Care of the Heart

A Special Newsletter for MVP Members



Heart Failure Daily Action Plan

Living with heart failure may not be easy. But there are things you can do to feel better, stay healthy longer, and avoid the hospital.

Good self-care means doing certain things every day, like taking your medicine. It's also about checking for symptoms such as weight gain and swelling. Tracking your symptoms every day will help you know which heart failure zone you're in. That can tell you when you need to get help.

Your Daily Action Plan

Here are some important things to do every day.

- **Weigh yourself at the same time each day.** Keep a calendar by the scale, and write your weight on it every day.
- **Pay attention to symptoms** such as shortness of breath or swelling in your feet, ankles, or legs.
- **Take your medicines as prescribed.** Try to take them at the same time every day.
- **Limit sodium.** Your doctor may want you to eat less than 2,000 mg of sodium each day.
- **Be active.** But watch for signs that your heart is being stressed, and know when to stop and rest.

Check each day to see which heart failure zone you're in:

Green Zone

You are doing well. This is where you want to be.

- Your weight is stable. This means it is not going up or down.
- You breathe easily.
- You are sleeping well. You are able to lie flat without shortness of breath.
- You can do your usual activities.

Yellow Zone

Call your doctor. Your symptoms are changing.

- You have new or increased shortness of breath.
- You are dizzy or lightheaded, or you feel like you may faint.
- You have sudden weight gain, such as three pounds or more in two to three days.
- You have increased swelling in your legs, ankles, or feet.
- You are so tired or weak that you cannot do your usual activities.
- You are not sleeping well. Shortness of breath wakes you up at night. You need extra pillows.

Your doctor's name and contact information:

Red Zone

Call 911. This is an emergency.

- You have symptoms of sudden heart failure, such as:
 - Severe trouble breathing.
 - Coughing up pink, foamy mucus.
 - A new irregular or fast heartbeat.
- You have symptoms of a heart attack. These may include:
 - Chest pain or pressure, or a strange feeling in the chest.
 - Sweating.
 - Shortness of breath.
 - Nausea or vomiting.
 - Pain, pressure, or a strange feeling in the back, neck, jaw, or upper belly or in one or both shoulders or arms.
 - Lightheadedness or sudden weakness.
 - A fast or irregular heartbeat.

If you have symptoms of a heart attack:

After you call 911, the operator may tell you to chew one adult-strength or two to four low-dose aspirin. Wait for an ambulance. Do not try to drive yourself.



More Self-Care Tips

There are other things you can do to take care of your body and your heart.

- Try to stay at a healthy weight. Eat a healthy diet with lots of fresh fruits, vegetables, and whole grains.
- If you smoke, quit.
- Limit the amount of alcohol you drink.
- Keep high blood pressure and diabetes under control. If you need help, talk with your doctor.
- Talk to your doctor if you feel sad and hopeless much of the time or if you are worried and anxious. These may be signs of depression or anxiety. Treatment with counseling and medicine can help.

When you take charge of your health, you're more likely to feel better and keep your heart failure from getting worse.



MVP Health Care offers a condition health management program for members living with heart disease. For more information or to see if you qualify, call **1-866-942-7966**. MVP's program is based on the American Heart Association (AHA) and the American College of Cardiology's Guidelines for Preventing a Heart Attack and Death in Patients with Atherosclerotic Cardiovascular Disease.

Information in this newsletter does not constitute medical advice. If you have questions about your health, talk to your doctor.

Health benefit plans are issued or administered by MVP Health Plan, Inc.; MVP Health Insurance Company; MVP Select Care, Inc.; and MVP Health Services Corp., operating subsidiaries of MVP Health Care, Inc. Not all plans available in all states and counties.

Checking Your Weight

People who have heart failure need to track their weight carefully. Checking your weight lets you know how much extra fluid your body is holding on to. Sudden weight gain may mean that fluid is building up in your body because your heart failure is getting worse. Knowing how your weight is changing helps you manage your heart failure.

It's not hard to track your weight.

Here are some things to keep in mind:

- Weigh yourself on the same scale every day, at the same time each day.
- Keep a calendar by the scale. Write your weight on it each day.
- If you suddenly gain weight, call your doctor.

How do you check your weight when you have heart failure?

It's easy to keep track of your weight if you check it every day. Here are some tips:

- Weigh yourself at the same time each day. Use the same scale on a hard, flat surface. The best time is in the morning after you go to the bathroom and before you eat or drink anything.
- Wear the same thing each time you weigh yourself, or always wear nothing. Don't wear shoes.
- Keep a calendar by the scale. Write your weight on it each day. Take your calendar with you when you see your doctor.



Contact Us

For more information, call **1-866-942-7966**

Monday–Friday, 8:30 am–5:00 pm

TTY: **1-800-662-1220**

We value your opinion.

Please fill out a brief, anonymous survey at **mvplistens.com**. We will use this information to create a better experience for all of our members. All responses are 100 percent confidential. The survey only takes a few minutes to complete.

Take notes.

Keep a few notes on your calendar about how you feel each day. Here are some things to ask yourself:

- Is it harder to catch your breath?
- Are you more tired?
- Are your feet and ankles swollen?
- Do your legs or belly seem puffy?

When to call your doctor.

If you suddenly gain weight, call your doctor. Your doctor may tell you how much weight to watch out for. But in general, call your doctor if you gain 3 lb (1.4 kg) or more in two to three days. If you are gaining weight slowly, tell your doctor on your next visit.

Tell your doctor if you are having to prop yourself up at night to breathe, or if you wake up in the night feeling out of breath.

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