

Be ready to talk to the doctor or nurse - Heart Failure

Use this handout to prepare for a talk with your doctor or nurse. To help you remember, circle the items below that you want to talk about.

About your drugs

- What drugs you take every day
 - Drugs for high blood pressure or to help your heart
 - Water pills (diuretics)
 - Drugs for cholesterol problems
 - Aspirin or clopidogrel (Plavix)
- How often to take them
- How often do you forget to take them
- Do you take drugs prescribed by other doctors

Tell about any drug side effects

- Leg cramps
- Muscle cramps
- Hard stools
- Heartbeats that are irregular: some fast and some slow
- Slow heart rate
- Dry cough
- Dizzy or lightheaded when you stand up
- Skin rash
- Dark stools

How you are feeling

- Tired all the time
- Less interest in people or doing things
- Angry, sad, or feel there is no hope
- Can you see and hear OK

Tell how much you weigh

- Do you check and write down your weight every day
- Do you check your pulse every day
- Do you check your weight every day
- Show your doctor your weight log or chart, if you have one



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Chest pain or shortness of breath

- New or getting worse
- What to do when you have a chest pain episode
- When you get chest pains or feel short of breath
 - Walking in the house
 - Walking up stairs
 - Cold air
 - When having sex
 - Wakes you up at night

What you are eating

- How many meals and snacks you eat a day
- Gaining weight
- How to eat a low fat diet for your heart
- How to make your food taste better
- Do you watch how much salt you eat

Smoking or alcohol use

- If you smoke
- If others smoke in your home
- How many drinks with alcohol you have a day

Tests or shots you may need

- Cholesterol test
- Blood count
- Sodium and potassium check
- Kidney tests
- Flu shot
- Pneumococcal (pneumonia) shot

Other doctors, nurses, or providers you have seen

- Emergency room (ER) visits or hospital stays
- Family doctor
- Cardiologist or heart doctor
- Naturopathic or homeopathic practitioner
- Other health care provider

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Help you need in the home

- To clean, cook, or shop
 - To move around at home
 - To take drugs
 - For bowel or bladder care
 - Other help
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The content in this letter is intended as general information and may not apply to you or your condition. Talk to your doctor about how to best use this information and how to take care of your medical condition. This information is not intended to provide or replace professional medical advice or services.
