

Preparation for Your Next Doctor Visit — Heart Failure

Take your records to every doctor visit.

1. Record your weight every day.
2. Record everything you eat for at least one week. Include both meals and snacks.
3. Take a list of all your medications, including over-the-counter medications, with you to your next appointment.
 - Confirm your daily medication plan with your doctor.
 - Confirm what medications you should take if you have problems.
 - Record any problems you've felt when taking your medication.
4. Ask your doctor to check your feet for swelling.
5. Talk with your doctor about what you should do if you feel any of the following:
 - Weight gain of more than 2 pounds in one day or 3 to 5 pounds in one week, or as your doctor indicates.
 - Increased tiredness or pain from activity
 - Swelling in ankles, feet and/or tighter pants
 - Increased shortness of breath
 - Adding more pillows in order to sleep comfortably
 - Chest pain
 - Very slow or very rapid pulse

Ask your doctor for a written plan of action if you experience any of these symptoms.

6. Take your written list of questions to your next doctor visit.

Sources: 2013 ACCF/AHA Guideline for the Management of Heart Failure. Accessed: 11/24/2015.
<http://circ.ahajournals.org/content/128/16/e240.extract>

National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute. How is heart failure treated? Accessed: 11/24/2015.
<http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/health-topics/topics/hf/treatment>