

Heart Failure: Checking Your Weight Daily



When you have heart failure, you need to watch for changes in your weight. A sudden weight gain can mean more fluid is building up in your body and your heart failure is getting worse.

Learn to weigh yourself and keep a record of changes. This way, you can tell your doctor as soon as you notice any problems.

Weigh yourself daily

Weigh yourself at the same time each day, using the same scale. Do not wear shoes. Wear the same thing each time you weigh yourself, or wear nothing at all. The best time is in the morning after you go to the bathroom. Weigh yourself before breakfast. Do not have anything to drink first.

Learn what your "dry weight" is. This is how much you weigh without extra fluids. Talk with your doctor about how to find your dry weight. Write down your dry weight here: _____.

Compare your daily weight to your dry weight. This will help you see if you have suddenly gained weight.

Keep a calendar next to your scale. Write your weight on it each day, and take it with you when you see your doctor. Use the same scale each time, and make sure that it is on a hard, flat surface.

Keep notes on how you feel each day so that your doctor can compare it with your weight. Write down whether you are having more shortness of breath. Did your feet and ankles swell? Did you notice any puffiness in your legs?

Call your doctor if you notice a sudden weight gain. In general, call if you gain 3 pounds or more in 2 to 3 days. Your doctor can tell you how much weight gain to watch for. A sudden weight gain may mean that your heart failure is getting worse. Also tell your doctor about any slower weight gain you may have.

Watch your sodium and fluids

You will need to limit sodium (salt) in your diet. Most people need to eat less than 2,000 milligrams (mg) of sodium each day. Ask your doctor if you also need to limit the amount of fluid you drink and eat each day.

Talk to your doctor about your medicines to reduce fluid buildup and weight gain. You are probably taking a diuretic (water pill), which helps your body get rid of extra water.

