



American Heart Association®

Healthy for Good™

LIFESTYLE CHANGES FOR HEART FAILURE

Small changes can make a big difference

Following recommendations about diet, exercise and other habits can help alleviate heart failure symptoms, slow your disease's progression and improve your everyday life. Important lifestyle changes may include:

Quitting smoking/vaping



Each puff of nicotine from tobacco smoke temporarily increases heart rate and blood pressure, even as less oxygen-rich blood circulates through the body. People who quit smoking are more likely to have their heart failure symptoms improve.

Maintaining or losing weight



Sudden weight gain or loss can be a sign that you're developing heart failure, or that your heart failure is progressing. Weigh yourself at the same time each morning, preferably before breakfast and after urinating. Notify your doctor if you gain three or more pounds in one day, five or more pounds in one week.

Tracking your daily fluid intake



If you have heart failure, it's common for your body to retain fluid. So your healthcare team may recommend limiting your liquid intake. Talk with your doctor about how much liquid to drink every day.

Avoiding or limiting alcohol and caffeine



If you drink alcohol, do so in moderation. This means no more than one to two drinks per day for men and one drink per day for women. Talk to your doctor about whether it's okay for you to drink alcohol. Consume only a moderate amount of caffeine per day, no more than a cup or two of coffee.

Eating a heart healthy diet



Eat a diet of fruits and vegetables, whole grains, low-fat dairy products, skinless poultry and fish, nuts and legumes, and non-tropical vegetable oils. Limit saturated fat, trans fat, cholesterol, sodium, red meat, sweets and sugar-sweetened beverages.

Being physically active



If you're not physically active, talk to your doctor about starting an exercise regimen. Workout at the same time every day so it becomes a regular part of your lifestyle.

Managing stress & controlling your blood pressure



Take 15 to 20 minutes a day to sit quietly, breathe deeply and think of a peaceful scene. Or try a gentle yoga class or meditation. Monitoring blood pressure at home, in addition to regular monitoring in a doctor's office, can help control high blood pressure.

For more tools and information on managing heart failure visit: www.heart.org/northbayheartfailure

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