



## Heart Failure Transitional Care Clinic Home Care Guide



# Making the Most of Your Treatment Plan

The Heart Failure Transitional Care Clinic (HFTCC) will help you make the most of your treatment plan. This guide is part of that plan. It will help you and your loved ones learn the care and lifestyle changes you'll need after you leave the hospital. It also includes logs to help you track your weight, blood pressure and any symptoms each day.



If you have questions or problems, call 504-703-8373 or your HFTCC team member listed below. We are available Monday – Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

## Heart Failure Transitional Care Team

Mickalynn Driggins, RN  
Annette Ayala, BSN, RN  
Erin Picou, PA-C  
504-703-8373

For urgent issues after hours or on the weekend, call 504-842-3000 and ask the operator to page the heart transplant physician on call. **Be sure to let them know you are a patient of the Heart Failure Transitional Care Clinic.**



**NOTE:** Please bring this care guide to all future appointments.



# What is the Heart Failure Transitional Care Clinic?

Being diagnosed with heart failure can be difficult. At the Heart Failure Transitional Care Clinic (HFTCC), our goal is to help you make the most of your treatment plan. We know your lifestyle will need to be different now. We are here to help make that transition easier.

Over the next 4-6 weeks, you will work with a devoted team of heart failure specialists. These specialists will help you make necessary changes to increase your quality of life at home. They will also monitor your symptoms and help you stick to your medication regimen.

This guide covers the most important things you need to know to follow your treatment plan. It may also help your loved ones understand why these changes are necessary and important.





# Top 5 things to help you improve your quality of life

**1**

## **Take your medications as directed.**

- Do not change or stop any medications without talking to the HFTCC team.
- Bring your list of medications or the bottles to your office visits.

**2**

## **Weigh yourself daily.**

- Keep a routine: same time, same scale, write it down - every day. Use the weight log at the back of this guide or a notebook.
- Report weight gain of 3 lbs. or more in a single day or 5 lbs. or more in 3 days to your HFTCC team.

**3**

## **Follow a low salt and limited fluid diet.**

- Limit your salt (also called sodium) to 2000-3000 mg per day and 1 ½ - 2 liters of fluid per day.
- Always measure – don't guess.
- Read all food and drink labels.

**4**

## **Stop smoking. Start exercising.**

- If you smoke, join a program to help you quit. We can help you find one.
- Start exercising slowly and work your way up to 30 minutes or more of activity each day.

**5**

## **Keep your appointments. Call your team.**

- We will schedule follow up appointments for you, both by phone and in-person.
- Call 504-703-8373 or send a message through MyOchsner if you have any questions.

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## Your Medications

Take Your Medications correctly to live longer, feel better and spend less time in the hospital.

- Take all your medications the way your doctor has instructed you.
- DO NOT change your doses without first calling your HFTCC team.
- Medicines may change after each doctor's appointment or while you are in the hospital.
- Keep an up-to-date list of all your medications.
- Share your medication list with all your providers.
- Let your doctor or another member of your HFTCC team know if you cannot afford your medicine or have trouble getting your prescription filled.

## Know Your Medications

These kinds of medications are often prescribed to heart failure patients. You may take one or more of them depending on your specific needs. It's important to know what each one is and why you take it.

- **ACE Inhibitors** lower blood pressure and decrease the strain on your heart. This makes it easier for the heart to pump. Some patients may take other drugs called Angiotensin Receptor Blockers (also called ARBs) to achieve the same results.
- **ARNIs (Angiotensin receptor-neprilysin inhibitors)** can lower blood pressure and decrease strain on the heart better than ACE inhibitors or ARBs alone. They have similar effects but for some patients, adding these drugs helps improve heart function.
- **Beta-blockers** help lower blood pressure and slow your heart rate. This lessens the amount of work your heart must do. Beta-blockers may improve the heart's ability to pump over time.
- **Diuretics (also called water pills)** help the body get rid of excess water. This helps prevent swelling. Having less fluid in the body to pump means your heart doesn't have to work as hard. Some diuretics also cause your body to lose a mineral called potassium. Your doctor will tell you if you need to take potassium supplements or eat foods high in potassium.
- **Digoxin** helps strengthen your heart. This helps your heart pump more blood with each beat so more oxygen-rich blood travels to the rest of your body.
- **Aldosterone antagonists** help alter hormones and decrease strain on the heart.
- **Hydralazine and nitrates** are two different medications used together to treat heart failure. They may come in one combination pill to lower blood pressure and decrease how hard the heart has to pump.

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## Watch Your Weight

### Weigh Yourself Every Day

- Make sure you have a scale and can read the numbers easily.
  - Place the scale on a hard, flat, level floor.
  - Weigh yourself every morning after urinating and before you eat or drink.
  - Wear the same amount of clothing and use the same scale every day.
  - Write down your weight EVERY DAY. Use the Heart Failure Zone Chart and Heart Failure Daily Weight and Symptom Tracker in this guide to help you know when to call your team.
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## Do Not Use Salt

### Throw Away Your Salt Shaker!

- Don't add salt to your food during or after cooking or preparing. Many foods have natural amounts of salt in them already.
- Limit your salt (sodium) to 2000-3000 mg per day. For example, 1 teaspoon of salt = 2300 mg/23 g of salt.
- Substitute pepper, lemon, lime, garlic or herbs to give food flavor.
- Avoid processed or store-prepared foods. They contain high salt amounts.
- READ FOOD LABELS CAREFULLY.
- Ask your HFTCC team to connect you with a dietician. A dietician can help you learn to prepare and choose foods without salt.

### Tips to Reduce Salt and Sodium

- Use reduced sodium or no-salt-added products
  - Buy fresh, frozen (unseasoned), or canned vegetables with no salt added
  - Choose ready-to-eat breakfast cereals that are lower in sodium
  - Use herbs and spices instead of salt
  - Cook rice, pasta, and hot cereals without salt
  - Rinse canned foods such as tuna or beans to remove some of the sodium
  - Limit cured foods, such as bacon, ham or sausage
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## Foods High in Salt – AVOID or LIMIT these foods

- Canned foods or soups
- Frozen dinners
- Deli meats
- Jar tomato or pasta sauce
- Pickles
- Sausages and kielbasa
- French fries and potato chips
- Ham, bacon and hot dogs
- Sea salt
- Adobo, Creole or Cajun seasoning
- Cheeses
- Soy sauce

## Foods Low in Salt – CHOOSE and SELECT these foods:

- Meat, poultry, fish and shellfish that are broiled, baked, grilled or roasted
- Fresh fruits like apples, oranges, or bananas
- Fresh vegetables like spinach, carrots, or broccoli
- Whole grains such as brown or wild rice, quinoa or barley
- Unsalted popcorn and unsalted nuts
- Low-sodium chips and pretzels
- Eggs
- Beans and peas
- Fat-free or low-fat (1%) milk and fat-free or low-fat plain yogurt
- Low-sodium cheese like natural Swiss cheese
- Soy milk with added calcium, vitamin A, and vitamin D



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## Follow these Fluid Restrictions

### Measure and Watch Your Fluids

- Do not drink more than 1 ½ - 2 liters (50-60 ounces) of fluid in any 24-hour period
- Measure all fluids and liquids you drink
- Take your medications with your liquids at mealtime
- Rinse your mouth with water, but don't swallow
- Rinse your mouth with cool mouthwash
- Freeze grapes, berries, or bits of fruit and let them thaw in your mouth
- Divide your fluids between meals and snacks during the day
- Include soups, gravy, ice, ice cream, and anything that becomes liquid at room temperature in your daily fluid restriction
- If you have diabetes, controlling your blood sugar will help control your thirst

### Fluid Conversion Guidelines

- + 1 cup = 8 ounces = 240 cc = 240 ml
- + 4 cups = 32 ounces = 1000 ml
- + 1 can of soda = 1.5 cups = 12 ounces = 360 ml
- + 1 quart = 1 liter = 1000 ml
- + 2 liters = 67 ounces = 2000 ml
- + 8 ounces of ice = 6 ounces of water = 180 ml (Ice counts as a fluid!)

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## Exercise and Physical Activity

### Move More – Safely

- Be sure to talk to your doctor about what kind of exercise is best for you
- Stop and rest if you get tired, have trouble breathing, or feel chest pain
- Pace yourself, but keep active
- Avoid exercising in extreme heat or cold
- Slowly try to build up to 30 minutes of aerobic exercise each day
- Try things like walking, bicycling, or swimming to strengthen your heart

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## Do NOT Smoke

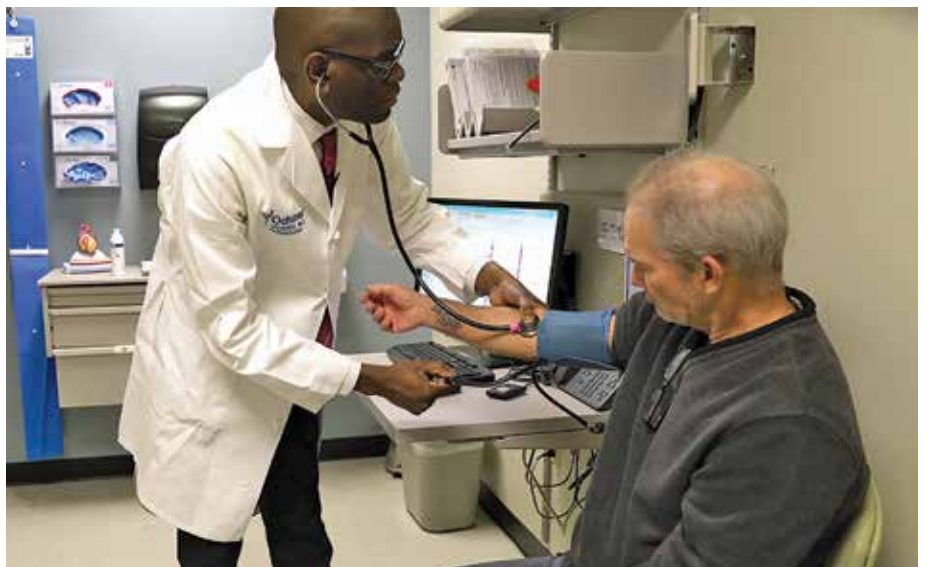
### It Pays to Quit

- If you smoke – whether cigarettes, cigars or e-cigarettes – please STOP!
  - Smoking makes your heart work harder
  - Smoking can lead to heart attacks
  - Ask a member of your HFTCC team, your doctor or nurse about help to quit smoking
  - Joining a stop smoking (smoking cessation) program can help you quit
  - Call 504-842-7490 or 1-844-371-5806 to find a free Ochsner smoking cessation program near you
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## Go to Your Appointments

### Keep Your Appointments to Stay on Top of Your Health

- Before you leave the hospital, we'll schedule your follow-up appointments
- Make sure you have a ride to your appointment
- GO TO ALL OF YOUR SCHEDULED APPOINTMENTS
- Bring a friend or family member to your appointments
- Bring an up-to-date list of all your medications to every doctor's visit
- Always ask your provider to explain if you don't understand something



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## Start the DASH Eating Plan

### DASH – Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension

The DASH eating plan is a flexible, balanced way to create healthy-eating habits. There are no special foods. Instead, you follow daily and weekly nutritional goals. Following the DASH Eating Plan, you'll

- Eat vegetables, fruits and whole grains
- Include fat-free or low-fat dairy products, fish, poultry, nuts, and vegetables in your diet
- Limit foods that are high in saturated fat, such as fatty meats, full-fat dairy products, or tropical oils (coconut, palm kernel, palm oils)
- Limit sugar-sweetened drinks and sweets

**When you practice several healthy lifestyle habits you are more likely to achieve and maintain healthy blood pressure and cholesterol levels.** To learn more about the DASH Eating Plan, visit [www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health-topics/dash-eating-plan](http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health-topics/dash-eating-plan).

### DASH Eating Plan Goals for a 2,000-Calorie-a-Day-Diet

Food Group	Daily Servings
Grains	6-8
Meats, poultry, fish	6 or less
Vegetables	4-5
Fruit	4-5
Low-fat or fat-free dairy products	2-3
Fats and oils	2-3
Sodium	2,300 mg max
Food Group	Weekly Servings
Nuts, seeds, dry beans, and peas	4-5
Sweets	5 or less

The DASH Eating Plan is just one key part of a heart-healthy lifestyle. Combining it with other lifestyle changes such as physical activity can help you control your blood pressure and LDL-cholesterol for life.

## Keep a Heart Failure Zone Chart

### Check the Chart Daily

Use this chart to check your weight, swelling, breathing, energy level, and appetite. Call your HFTCC team if ONE or MORE of these are in the yellow or red zone.

	<b>Green Zone: Keep up the good work!</b>	<b>Yellow Zone: Call your HFTCC team today.</b>	<b>Red Zone: Call your HFTCC team NOW!</b>
<b>Weight</b>	My weight is 2 lbs. within my target weight. Maximum weight: -----	My weight is 3-4 lbs. over my target weight. Maximum weight: -----	My weight is 5 lbs. over my target weight. Maximum weight: -----
<b>Swelling</b>	I do not have swelling.	I have swelling in my belly, foot, ankle or shin, knee or thigh	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I have swelling in my belly</li> <li>• I feel bloated or my pants are tighter</li> </ul>
<b>Breathing</b>	Breathing feels normal. Sleep is normal.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I feel winded or cough while walking, talking, eating, bathing or dressing.</li> <li>• I need to use more pillows to sleep.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I cannot catch my breath at rest.</li> <li>• I feel less alert.</li> <li>• I need to sleep sitting up to breathe.</li> </ul>
<b>Energy Level</b>	My energy level is normal.	I am too tired to do most of my normal activities.	I am so tired that I cannot do my normal activities.
<b>Eating</b>	My appetite is normal.	My appetite is normal.	I feel full quickly or I've lost my appetite.

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## Watch for These Signs and Symptoms

If any of these occur, call your HFTCC team at 504-703-8373.

- Increased shortness of breath when you move
- Increased swelling in your legs and ankles
- Weight gain of more than 3-5 lbs. in a week
- Trouble breathing when you're lying down
- Worsening fatigue or tiredness
- Stomach bloating, a full feeling, or loss of appetite
- Increased coughing – especially when you're lying down



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## Notes

[illegible]

Heart Failure Daily We						
Name: _____		MRN: _____			DOB: _____	
Date						
Record	Weight					
	Blood Pressure					
Green Zone - Good job!	Weight within 2 lbs of goal weight?					
	No swelling?					
	Feeling good? Breathing, sleep, appetite normal?					
Yellow Zone - Call Today	Weight is up 3-4 lbs?					
	Swelling in my belly, feet/ankles, knee or thigh?					
	Short of breath or cough while walking/talking, eating, bathing or dressing?					
	Need extra pillows for sleep?					
	Too tired to do some of your normal activities?					
Red Zone - CALL NOW	Weight is up at least 5 lbs?					
	Swelling in belly, feel very bloated, clothing tight?					
	Can't catch breath, short of breath at rest, feeling less alert?					
	Have to sleep sitting up in a chair or recliner?					
	So tired you cannot do any normal activity.					
	No appetite? Or feel so full you cannot eat?					

If you checked 2 or more items in the **yellow zone**, please **call today!**

If you checked 2 or more items in the **red zone**, please **call 504-703-8373 right now!**

## Sleep and Symptom Tracker

**Dry Weight Goal : \_\_\_\_\_**

[illegible]

**For urgent issues after hours or on weekends,** please call 504-842-3000 and ask to page the Heart Transplant Doctor on call.



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## Sight and Symptom Tracker

**Dry Weight Goal :** \_\_\_\_\_

[illegible]

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Heart Failure Daily We						
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