



We provide trusted, compassionate and expert health care to our community members to improve their health, independence and dignity.

Cornerstone VNA is an independent nonprofit organization. Our programs include:

HOME CARE

Advanced care by an interdisciplinary team for patients with complex medical issues

HOSPICE CARE

End-of-life care including physical, emotional and spiritual comfort

PALLIATIVE CARE

Specialized care and symptom management for people with chronic illnesses

LIFE CARE

Private duty program to help people “age in place”

COMMUNITY CARE

Community outreach, wellness clinics, educational programs, and caregiver support

To learn more about our health care programs call 800-691-1133 or visit our website, cornerstonevna.org.

Main Office: 178 Farmington Road, Rochester, NH 03867



LEARN HOW TO MANAGE YOUR CONDITION

What about the disease process and risks?

How can medicine, diet, and exercise help?

What can YOU do to improve your health?

603-332-1133

Heart Failure Can be Managed

This booklet was put together to help you understand your role (“self-care”) in keeping your heart failure under control.

Self-care includes:

1. Understanding your disease
2. Personal Action Plan
 - ♥ Monitoring yourself for symptoms and taking action right away when they occur
 - ♥ Checking your weight daily and taking action right away when your weight goes up
3. Taking your medicines as ordered by your doctor
4. Decreasing the amount of sodium in your diet
5. Avoiding alcohol
6. Exercising and staying active
7. Seeing your doctor regularly
8. Telemonitoring

- It is important to understand the symptoms that you have when your heart failure worsens.
- You will tend to have the same symptoms each time your heart failure worsens.

Symptoms I have had are:

Notes:

My Personal Plan: (continued)

Things that would help me meet my goal:

My confidence in being able to meet my GOAL:

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Not					Very					
Confident					Confident					

For More Information

Heart Failure Society of America
www.abouthf.org 1-651-642-1633

American Heart Association
www.americanheart.org 1-800-242-8721

Local Resources:

CORNERSTONE VNA
178 Farmington Road, Rochester, NH 03867
603-332-1133

My Nurse is: _____

Take this booklet with you to your doctor appointment.

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Take this booklet with you to your doctor appointment.

Your Action Plan:

Use this guide to help you report changes in your symptoms to your doctor or home care provider.



Reporting symptoms early may keep you out of the hospital.

You are doing WELL when:

- Your weight is stable
- You have no trouble breathing
- You can do your normal activities
- You have no changes in your symptoms

Call CORNERSTONE VNA at 332-1133

****In the next 24 hours when:**

- Your weight goes up _____ pounds in _____ days
- You have new swelling in your feet, ankles, hands or abdomen
- You have a dry, harsh cough that does not go away
- You have increased sputum or it has changed in color
- You use 2 or more pillows or a recliner to breathe better at night **if** this is different from how you usually sleep
- You feel more tired or have less energy than usual
- You have side effects from your medicines

Call 911 RIGHT AWAY when:

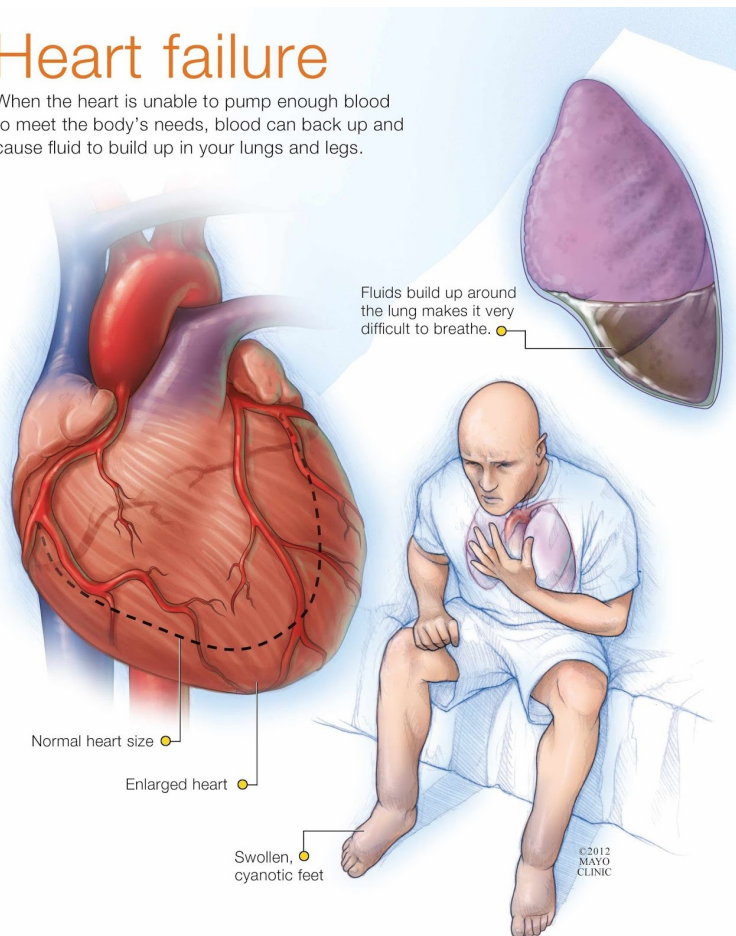
- You have trouble breathing - **severe shortness of breath**
- You feel dizzy
- You feel very anxious
- **You have chest pain that does not go away**

What does Congestive Heart Failure mean?

- It means that your heart does not pump enough blood to meet your body's needs
- Blood can “Back Up” in your lungs. Too much blood in your lungs causes shortness of breath
- You may cough more or wake up at night short of breath
- You may have swelling in your legs, abdomen, feet, hands or other parts of your body
- You may also feel tired and not feel like eating
- You will notice your weight increasing possibly 2 pounds or more overnight or 3-5 pounds in 5 days.

Heart failure

When the heart is unable to pump enough blood to meet the body's needs, blood can back up and cause fluid to build up in your lungs and legs.



Managing Your Condition

My Personal Plan:

I would like to work on the following areas to manage my heart failure:

- ☐ Understanding my disease
- ☐ Manage my medications
- ☐ Nutrition
- ☐ Manage side effects
- ☐ Other _____

My Personal Plan:

My GOAL for the next month is:

Possible problems in meeting my goal:

Managing Your Condition

A sudden increase in weight means that your body is retaining fluid. If your weight goes up, this is the time to **TAKE ACTION**. Do not wait for other symptoms to occur. An extra diuretic pill for a day or two is usually prescribed until your weight comes back down.

Action taken right away will help keep you out of the hospital.

If you do have a weight gain, think about possible reasons:

- ♥ Did I forget to take my medicine?
- ♥ Did I eat high sodium foods in the last few days?

DAILY WEIGHT LOG – record your weight each day using:

- ♥ same scale
- ♥ same time of day
- ♥ same type of clothing

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT

REPORT! Weight gain of _____ or more pounds
within a _____ day period

Medicines

- There are 4 types of medicines that are usually used to manage heart failure (refer to page 5).
- You may be on more medicines than these.
- Your doctor, nurse, or pharmacist will give you more specific information about your medicine.
- *Always check before taking over-the-counter medicine or herbal supplements.*
- Some medicine can be harmful for patients with heart failure.
- Your home care nurse will work with you to make sure you understand all of your medicines.
- If you often forget to take your medicine, your nurse can show you different ways to help you remember to take your medicine at the right times.



Heart Failure Medications

☐ Diuretics (“water pills”)

These drugs work in your kidney and help you get rid of extra fluid and sodium through your urine.

I am taking: _____

☐ Angiotensin converting enzyme (ACE) inhibitor

These drugs work to open up blood vessels. This makes it easier for your heart to pump. Blood pressure is lowered. Use of ACE inhibitors for heart failure contributes to a longer, healthier life.

I am taking: _____

☐ Beta blockers

These drugs work to improve heart muscle function and block chemicals that can make your heart failure worsen. Blood pressure is lowered. Use of beta blockers in heart failure contributes to a longer, healthier life.

I am taking: _____

☐ Digoxin

Digoxin makes your heart beat stronger and at a regular rhythm and helps to reduce heart failure symptoms. Your nurse will teach you to check your pulse when you are on Digoxin. Call if your pulse is less than _____

I am taking: _____

Telehealth

What is Telehealth?

- In addition to your already scheduled in person visits M-F; the Telehealth nurse will initiate scheduled video calls based on your condition or illness. Telehealth nursing will help you address any concerns and will do any teaching that is needed. You can see the nurse and the nurse can see you.
- A Telehealth nurse will work with your Provider to help get you the treatment you need or arrange for a nurse to do a home visit if needed to help keep you home.
- At any point if you are not feeling well or are concerned you can call Cornerstone VNA to report your symptoms.

What to expect?

- ♥ You will need a working cell phone that can receive text messages
- ♥ Wifi is required to be able to text and use video calling with the Telehealth nurse
- ♥ A Telehealth nurse will remotely monitor you by texting, calling and/or using remote video to perform assessments and education.
- ♥ There is no equipment to install
- ♥ If your Provider wants you to monitor your vitals, you will be expected to purchase your own monitoring equipment (blood pressure, pulse oximeter and scale). Cornerstone staff can help guide you on the best most affordable equipment to purchase
- ♥ This program is FREE and very easy to use.

Activity & Exercise

You should monitor yourself for fatigue and shortness of breath when you exercise. Your home care nurse or therapist will teach you how to use the Borg scale so that you can rate your shortness of breath and/or fatigue during activity and exercise.

Modified Borg Scale

0	NOTHING AT ALL
0.5	VERY, VERY SLIGHT (just noticeable)
1	VERY SLIGHT
2	SLIGHT
3	MODERATE
4	SOMEWHAT SEVERE
5	SEVERE
6	
7	VERY SEVERE
8	
9	VERY, VERY SEVERE (almost maximal)
10	MAXIMAL

Diet & Nutrition

- **Sodium** makes your body retain fluid.
- Too much fluid makes your heart work harder and can make your heart failure worse.
- Your weight will increase and you may develop symptoms.
- Try to keep your sodium intake about 2000 milligrams (mg) per day or as ordered by your doctor.
- Salt is a major source of sodium. One teaspoon of salt contains 2400 mg of sodium!
- Your nurse or a dietitian will help you look at your own diet, help you read food labels, and can give you lists of foods that are high and low in sodium.
- Avoid alcohol as it can make your heart failure worsen.
- Some patients with heart failure should limit the amount of liquids they drink.
- I should limit my liquids to: _____



Diet & Nutrition

How can I lower my sodium intake?

Check off the things you think you can do.

- ☐ Do not add salt to my foods during cooking.
- ☐ Take the salt shaker off of my kitchen table.
- ☐ Try other seasonings to add flavor such as lemon juice, onion or garlic powder, or herbs.
- ☐ Read food labels to see which foods are high in sodium

I will avoid high sodium foods such as:

- ☐ Canned soups and vegetables
- ☐ Frozen dinners
- ☐ Hot dogs or packaged lunch meats
- ☐ Cheese and cheese spreads
- ☐ Deli meats such as ham
- ☐ Ketchup, soy sauce, salad dressings, barbeque sauce
- ☐ Frozen dinners that are high in sodium

I will eat lower sodium foods more often such as:

- ☐ Lean meats
- ☐ Low fat milk
- ☐ Reduced sodium cheese
- ☐ Cereals low in sodium
- ☐ Fresh fruits and vegetables

When going out to eat, I will:

- ☐ Choose items that are listed as “healthy choice” or “low sodium” on the menu
- ☐ Choose broiled or grilled foods instead of fried foods
- ☐ Ask for sauces and salad dressings “on the side”

Activity & Exercise

Staying Active and Safe:

- Exercise provides many benefits for you when you have heart failure.
- Activities such as walking, bike riding, or swimming are good exercise options.
- Exercise will:
 - ♥ *Improve your muscle tone*
 - ♥ *Strengthen your heart*
 - ♥ *Increase your energy*
 - ♥ *Make you feel better*
- Before starting an exercise program, your heart failure should be stable.
- Your weight should be at baseline and you should not be experiencing symptoms.
- It is important to start slowly when you are not used to exercise.
- A home physical therapist can help you begin your exercise program.

