

**HEAR YOUR  
HEART™**

# BE YOUR OWN **HEART SUCCESS** ADVOCATE

When you hear the word “failure,” it may conjure negative thoughts or all sorts of worst-case scenarios, especially when it comes to heart failure.

As you explore ways to take charge of your care, consider thinking about what **heart success** looks like for you.

Because the truth is, with proper attention and treatment, it is possible to live a better, longer life with heart failure.<sup>1</sup>



**Below are tips that can help empower you to live more successfully with heart failure.**

**Check out the recommendations below and talk to your doctor and care team to help you implement them into your day-to-day life.**

## 1. Establish your team

**Your care team may include a variety of doctors, family, friends and, most importantly, YOU.**

Keeping everyone connected and aware of how you are feeling can help you actively manage your care.

♥ **Be honest about how your team can best support you.** That could mean helping with grocery shopping or cleaning your house, bringing you to or from doctor appointments and even working with you to manage your treatment and medications.

♥ **Go into your appointments prepared** with questions and any health updates. Take notes or record a voice memo with your phone to refer back to and share with other members of your care team for reference.

♥ If you feel like you are not getting the best care possible, **do not be afraid to seek a second opinion** on a diagnosis or treatment plan, or request a referral for a specialist.

♥ **Reach out to a local or virtual advocacy group** for added support if you are finding it difficult to manage certain aspects of your heart failure journey.

## 2. Consider lifestyle changes

**Properly managing your lifestyle, including making small changes to your diet and exercise routines,<sup>1</sup> as well as caring for your mental health,<sup>2</sup> may help prevent and improve symptoms associated with heart failure.**

Research shows that regular physical activity has many benefits when managing heart failure, including increased energy throughout the day, keeping your muscles strong and helping you feel better overall.<sup>3</sup>

♥ **Simple adjustments to your diet may also help you feel better.** Aim to eat a variety of fruits and vegetables each day and reduce or eliminate certain foods and drinks, such as alcohol, salt, highly processed grains and processed meats.<sup>4</sup> Consult with a nutritionist if you have questions or need further help with your diet.

♥ **Mental health is just as important as physical health.** To understand the connection between mental health conditions and heart failure, speak to your care team and consider taking advantage of support programs early on.<sup>5</sup>

♥ **Keep track of your progress** and proactively tell your doctor how you are feeling. Consider the following questions:

- Did I find it easy to get out of bed and begin my day today?
- Did I take less breaks during my normal day-to-day activities today?
- Was I able to exercise for twice as long, or longer than normal, today?

## 3. Know your treatment plan

**You may be taking multiple medications to help manage your heart failure, as well as any related conditions you may have, such as chronic kidney disease or diabetes. It is important to keep track of these medications and monitor how they make you feel.**

♥ **Keep an up-to-date list of your prescriptions** with you at all times, including dosage and how frequently you take them. Be sure to share any updates in your treatment plan with your care team so everyone is in the loop.

♥ If your doctor recommends a new medication, **ask why**, so you can understand the potential benefits, as well as the risks.

♥ **Document any side effects or changes you experience** while taking your medications and share with your doctor so they can assess your treatment plan, as necessary.

**Use these tips to help define what heart success looks like for you and talk to your doctors about additional ways to play an active role in your heart failure care.**

These recommendations were created in collaboration with Dr. Alanna Morris, MD, MSc, FHFSA, FACC, FAHA, Associate Professor of Medicine, Division of Cardiology, Emory University School of Medicine, and advocate of the Hear Your Heart campaign.

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