

PRIORITIZING SELF-CARE AND MENTAL HEALTH STARTS HERE

HEAR YOUR
HEART®



Black women have a **50% higher** risk of developing heart failure than white women.¹

But they are less likely to be admitted to hospitals,² referred to specialists³ or to receive modern and progressive treatments.⁴ When receiving the right care is already a challenge, prioritizing yourself and your heart health can feel even more overwhelming. Chronic stress makes it harder to manage your heart failure and can increase the risk of additional health problems. Your mental health influences your physical well-being – and when you're living with heart failure, your mental state can impact how you prioritize your care.⁵

♥ The Big Picture

Significant health inequities and disparities can elevate feelings of depression or chronic stress and increase your risk of worsening heart failure symptoms.⁶ Taking time for yourself and practicing self-care have been shown to improve quality of life, reduce the number of hospitalizations and lead to longer survival in people living with chronic conditions, including **heart failure**.⁷

♥ What Is Self-Care?

Self-care is the practice of actively protecting and prioritizing your personal well-being and happiness, particularly during periods of stress.⁸

♥ Do What Works for You

Self-care is healthcare, and prioritizing yourself is a critical step toward better heart health. Incorporating simple but meaningful changes, like getting outdoors or enjoying a hobby, into your daily routine can improve overall health and well-being.⁸

Take the First Step Toward **Better Heart Health**

Prioritizing your health means you can spend more time doing what you love with who you love. Take time to focus on what really matters – whether that's spending time with friends or family, or leaning into spirituality, it's important to do what is best for you.

Mental Health

Black women are at risk for higher levels of stress,⁹ which can make it even more difficult to focus on your heart health. However, learning ways to reduce stress and find joy in your day-to-day life is good for the mind, body and soul.



Tip: Setting aside time to go for a walk, take a bath or read a book can help quiet your mind, balance hormones like cortisol (the stress hormone), lower blood pressure and improve brain health.⁸

Making Time for Me

Track your self-care progress

This Week's Wins ✓	M	T	W	T	F	S	S
Spent time outdoors							
Read a book							
Spent time with my pet							
Other:							

TOTAL ✓ _____

My goal for next week: _____

Exercise

Exercise is a necessary part of improving heart health and a great way to manage stress levels and preserve mental health. However, environmental issues, family responsibilities and lack of time can stand in the way of regular exercise. Finding a few minutes to prioritize a moderate and consistent exercise routine can help reduce hospitalization events and decrease symptoms of heart failure over time.¹⁰



Tip: The Department of Health and Human Services recommends getting at least 150 minutes of moderate aerobic activity or 75 minutes of vigorous aerobic activity per week.¹¹ Choose an activity you enjoy and stick with it!

Healthy Happens One Step at a Time

Track your self-care progress

This Week's Wins ✓	M	T	W	T	F	S	S
Yoga, stretched or worked out							
Walked with a family member, friend or pet							
Gardened or spent time outdoors							
Other:							

TOTAL ✓ _____

My goal for next week: _____

Nutrition

A healthy body is a beautiful body – and eating heart-healthy foods can benefit your whole body. Lowering your cholesterol, saturated fat and sodium intake can lead to positive changes in your overall well-being. You can still enjoy the foods you love by finding balance and learning to cook in a healthier way.¹²



Tip: While healthy eating doesn't happen overnight, eating more fruit or limiting saturated and trans fats can help put you on the right path. Plan ahead and create daily menus to help incorporate healthy eating habits.¹²

Eating Well for Heart Health

Track your self-care progress

This Week's Wins ✓	M	T	W	T	F	S	S
Ate more vegetables or fruits							
Limited saturated and trans fats							
Chose a low-sodium option							
Other:							

TOTAL ✓ _____

My goal for next week: _____

Visit [HFHeartYourHeart.com](https://www.hfheartyourheart.com) for more heart health and self-care tips.

These recommendations were created in collaboration with Dr. Alanna Morris, MD, MSc, FHFA, FACC, FAHA, Associate Professor of Medicine, Division of Cardiology, Emory University School of Medicine, and Dr. Johanna P. Contreras, MD, MSc, FACC, FAHA, FASE, FHFA, Associate Professor, Icahn School of Medicine, Director of the Ambulatory Heart Failure Network and Director of Diversity at Mount Sinai Health System. BROUGHT TO YOU BY: BOEHRINGER INGELHEIM AND ELI LILLY AND COMPANY

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