

# 8 Tips for Heart Health



## Take Your Prescribed Medications



Following the directives of your medical provider for medication management is essential to maintain the highest cardiac function.

## Check for Swelling in Your Feet, Ankles, Legs or Stomach



Swelling is a warning signal. Excess fluid causes the heart to have to work harder and/or exacerbates the ineffective heart function. Report it to your medical provider.

## Watch and Record Your Daily Fluid Intake



Too much fluid forces the heart to work extra hard to pump the excess fluid volume. This can increase your symptoms: shortness of breath, weight gain, bloating and swelling of the feet or legs.

## Weigh Yourself



Before breakfast, weigh yourself and write it down. Compare it to your last weight. Call your doctor or nurse if you see a gain of 2 pounds or more in a 24 hour period or 5 pounds or more in one week.

## Balance Activity and Rest Periods



Your medical provider, nurse, physical therapist or occupational therapist can help you develop an exercise and activity plan that works on muscle strength and flexibility.

## Eat Foods Low in Salt



Eat foods that are fresh, colorful and unprocessed. Salt hides out in a lot of foods we might think are healthy. We have some quick and easy tips on how to reduce your salt intake in this recent Marquis blog (<https://www.marquiscompanies.com/blog/those-new-warnings-about-salt/>)

## Everyday Determine Your Heart Zone

Knowing when to call your doctor is as easy as knowing these three color zones -- green, yellow and red.

### The Green Zone

This is your goal. Your symptoms are under control. You're not experiencing any shortness of breath; weight gain of 2 pounds in a 24 hour period; ankle, leg or stomach swelling; or chest pain.



### The Yellow Zone

This is your warning zone. Call your doctor or home health nurse if you experience weight gain of 2 pounds or more in a 24 hour period or 5 pounds or more in one week (If your weight increases 2 pounds or more in a 24 hour period or 5 pounds or more in 1 week, notify your doctor or nurse); increased shortness of breath and difficulty breathing when lying down; increased swelling of your feet, ankles, legs or stomach; dry cough; dizziness; or an uneasy, "something's not right" feeling.

### The Red Zone

This is the emergency zone. Go to the emergency room or call 911 immediately if you're struggling to breathe; or experiencing unrelieved shortness of breath while sitting still, chest pain, confusion and inability to think clearly.

## (Try to) Get 7 Hours of Sleep

Sleep helps reduce stress and inflammation, allowing your cells to "remodel" and your body and mind to heal.

So, set yourself up for success with the following:

- Limit your caffeine intake to the morning.
- Don't nap too long during the day.
- Avoid screen time before bedtime. The blue light emitting from your electronic devices triggers a chemical release in the brain that tells you to stay awake.
- Limit fluid intake before bed.
- Invest in a comfortable mattress and bedding.
- Keep your room on the cool side.
- If you snore, talk to your doctor about getting tested for sleep apnea.



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