

Why Physical Activity is Important for Heart Failure Patients

Why is daily physical activity important?

Daily physical activity and exercise can have immediate and long-term health benefits. Most importantly, regular activity can improve your quality of life.

What are some benefits of regular physical activity?

- Improves your mood
- Increases energy
- Improves symptoms
- Lowers blood pressure and cholesterol levels
- Improves heart function
- Lowers risk for diabetes

What are some examples of daily physical activity?

- Gardening
- Walking to the mailbox
- Marching while watching TV
- Using the stairs instead of elevator
- Daily household chores
- List your daily activities: _____

What symptoms should I look for while doing activity?

Do a self-assessment of your heart failure symptoms using the action plan below.

- Green zone = you can start your exercise routine
- Yellow zone = please call (734) 936-4000 and ask for your doctor.
- Red zone = call 9-1-1.

Heart Failure Action Plan

Call your doctor if you have any questions about this plan

Green Zone: Doing Well

You are in the **Green Zone** if:

- You have **no** shortness of breath
- **No** swelling
- **No** weight gain
- **No** chest pain
- **No** decrease in your ability to maintain your activity level

The **Green Zone** means that your symptoms are under control

Yellow Zone: Caution Call Your Doctor

You are in the **Yellow Zone** if you have **any** of the following:

- Weight gain (2 pounds or more in a day, or 4 pounds or more in one week)
- Cough
- Shortness of breath with activity
- Decrease in urine output
- Change in appetite (you are eating less but not losing weight)
- Increased swelling in your ankles, feet or stomach
- Trouble breathing when lying flat (need to sit in chair to sleep or need more pillows to sleep)

The **Yellow Zone** means that your symptoms are **no longer under control** and you should:

- **Call Your Doctor**
Mon - Fri 8:00am-5:00pm call **(800) 694-0184**
After 5:00pm, or on weekends or holidays call **(734) 936-6267** and ask them to page your heart doctor

Red Zone: Call 911

Red Zone means Emergency: Call 911 if you have any of the following:

- Chest tightness at rest
- Unrelieved chest pain after taking a total of 3 nitroglycerin tabs/sprays
- Wheezing
- Confusion
- Fainting spell
- Unrelieved shortness of breath when you are at rest

What can I do to prevent falls during physical activity?

Please review the “Preventing Patient Falls during a Hospital Stay” document given to you by your nurse. The document is also available online at www.careguides.med.umich.edu, search “preventing falls”.

You can follow the guidelines below to help prevent a fall.

The ABC’s of Fall Prevention

- **A**sk for help: Call the nurse or nurse aide if you want to get up.
- **B**e aware of your body: Do you feel dizzy or weak?
- **C**autious: Is there enough light? Are you wearing slip-resistant hospital socks?
- **D**anger: Do not use unsteady items such as a bedside table or IV pole, to get up.

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