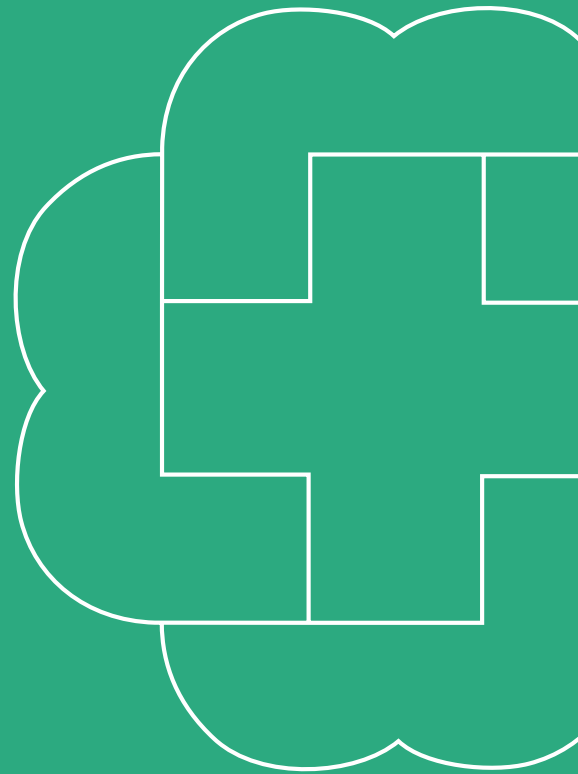


# Heart Failure

Information and Guidelines



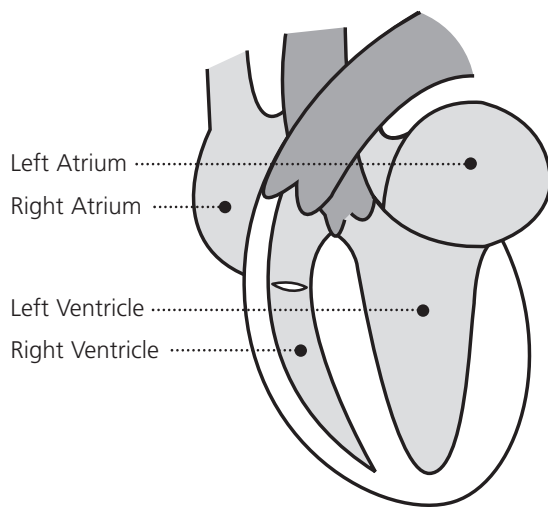
# Heart Failure

## Information and Guidelines

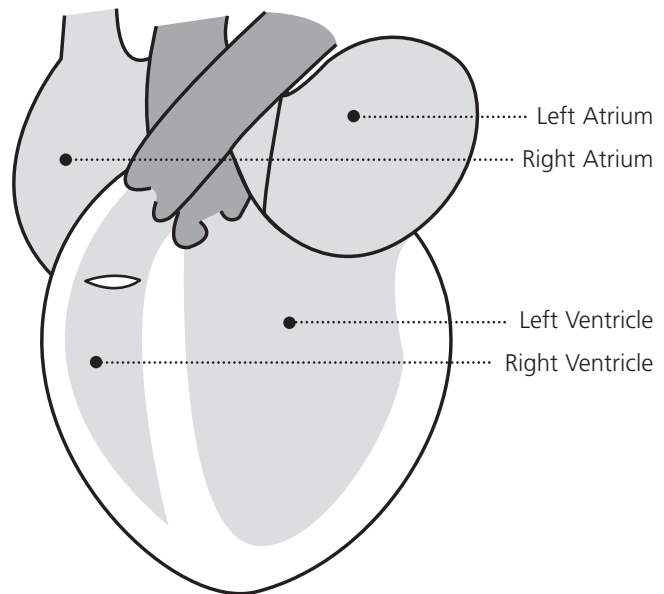
### What is heart failure?

Heart failure means the heart is not pumping blood as well as it should. It may pump at a different speed, pump blood out with less force, or pump out less blood with each beat. Blood back up in the blood vessels around the lungs and causes fluid to seep into the lungs. This makes it difficult to breathe. Many people with heart failure also have swollen feet and legs. Sometimes people with heart failure also get a bloated belly.

**Normal heart**



**Enlarged heart with heart failure**



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# Introduction

This book tells you about the disease called heart failure. We hope this information will help you know more about this disease.

Keep in mind that you are unique. Every health situation is different. If you have questions, you should feel free to call your heart doctor or your family doctor.

## Words to Know

Here are some key words about heart failure. Some are used in this notebook and your doctor may use others.

**Aorta:** main blood vessel that carries blood from the heart to the body

**Aortic stenosis:** a narrowing of the aortic valve

**Aortic valve:** heart valve that is between the bottom left part of the heart (left ventricle) and the aorta (the large artery that carries blood from the heart to the rest of the body)

**Artery:** blood vessel that takes blood away from your heart

**Atrial fibrillation:** irregular beat of the heart

*This may be a fast beat that starts in the atrium. This is a common problem after heart surgery, and it usually goes away. You may need medicine to control this fast beating.*

**Atrium:** one of the top two parts of the heart

**Biventricular cardiac pacemaker (defibrillator [BiV] or cardiac resynchronization therapy [CRT]):**

*In some people with heart failure, the electrical action of the heart is slowed in one or both of the bottom parts of the heart. This causes the right and the left side of the heart to beat in an odd*

*way. A new type of pacemaker called a biventricular pacemaker or cardiac resynchronization therapy can help the right and the left side to work normally. Some of the special pacemakers also have an implantable cardiac defibrillator (ICD). The device contains a generator (battery) usually placed in the upper chest. There are also three leads (wires) that are placed in the right atrium, right ventricle, and the left ventricle.*

**Cardiologist:** doctor who cares for problems of the heart

**Cardiomyopathy:** when the heart muscle is larger, thicker or stiffer than normal

**Coronary artery disease (CAD):** heart disease that happens when coronary arteries narrow or are blocked by a build-up of a fatty deposit called plaque

**Coronary artery bypass surgery (CABG or “cabbage”):** heart surgery to create a new path for blood to flow to heart muscle that is affected by blocked arteries

**Ejection fraction (EF):** measurement of the pumping ability of the heart muscle.

*An EF of 50 percent or more is considered normal.*

**Heart block:** electrical problem of the heart

*The electrical current of the heart is not able to travel in the normal way from the upper part of the heart to the lower part of the heart. This can cause the heartbeat to slow.*

**Heart failure:** heart is not pumping blood as well as it should

*The heart's pumping action becomes weak; blood backs up into the blood vessels around the lungs and causes fluid to seep into the lungs. This makes it difficult to breathe. Many people with heart failure also have swollen feet and legs. Sometimes people with heart failure also get a bloated belly.*

**Heart valves:** aortic, mitral, tricuspid and pulmonic valves

*These can be either too tight (stenotic) or not tight enough (insufficiency or regurgitation). Mitral valves can sometimes be repaired. Other valves are replaced with a mechanical valve or a valve made from animal tissue.*

**Implantable cardiac defibrillator (ICD):** device that treats very fast heartbeats, like ventricular tachycardia or ventricular fibrillation

*An ICD can stop the fast ventricular heart rhythm by giving a small shock to the heart. The generator (battery) is*

*usually implanted in the upper chest. One lead (wire) is placed in the right upper part and a second lead is placed in the right lower part of the heart. ICDs are used in people who are thought to have a high risk for having ventricular rhythms.*

**Myocardial infarction or heart attack:** when plaque ruptures and causes a clot to form and block the artery

*The heart muscle is damaged when it does not get enough blood and oxygen.*

**Vein:** blood vessel that returns blood and oxygen to the heart and lungs

*Veins are used for heart bypass grafts.*

**Ventricles:** bottom two parts of the heart

**Ventricular fibrillation:** a fast irregular heart rhythm that starts in the bottom part (ventricles) of the heart

*The heart quivers during ventricular fibrillation and is not able to pump any blood. This causes sudden cardiac death.*

**Ventricular tachycardia:** a fast heart rhythm that starts in the bottom part (ventricles) of the heart

*This can lead to sudden cardiac death.*

## General Guidelines for Heart-Healthy Living

- Take your medicines just as your doctor ordered.
- Weigh yourself every morning.
  - If you gain three pounds in one day or five pounds or more in five days, call your doctor.
- Follow a low-fat, low-cholesterol, low-sodium diet.
- Watch for these changes every day:
  - shortness of breath
  - weight gain
  - increased swelling of feet, ankles, legs and stomach
  - chest pain
  - feeling more tired — no energy
  - dry, hacking cough
  - harder to breathe when lying down
  - dizzy or lightheaded
  - feeling uneasy — “you know something is not right”
- Call your doctor before drinking any alcohol.
- Maintain a healthy body weight, cholesterol, blood pressure level and blood sugar level to help keep your heart failure in control.
- Follow an exercise program to get regular physical activity.
- Stop smoking. Not smoking is very important to your recovery and health.
  - If you smoke, PLEASE STOP. Information and support is available from your doctor, nurse or Bronson HealthAnswers at (269) 341-7723 or (800) 451-6310.


# Problems to Report to the Cardiologist (Heart Doctor) or Your Family Doctor

## HEART FAILURE ZONES:

**Green Zone: ALL CLEAR** – This zone is your goal.

Your symptoms are under control. You have:


- no shortness of breath
- no weight gain
- no increased swelling of feet, ankles, legs or stomach
- no chest pain



**Yellow Zone: CAUTION** – This zone is a warning.

Call your doctor's office if you have one or more of these symptoms:

- weight gain of three pounds in one day **OR**
- weight gain of five pounds or more in five days
- more shortness of breath
- more swelling of your feet, ankles, legs or stomach
- feeling more tired – no energy
- dry, hacking cough
- harder to breathe when lying down
- feeling uneasy – “you know something is not right”
- dizzy or lightheaded



**Red Zone: EMERGENCY**

Go to the emergency room or call 911 if you have any of the following:

- struggling to breathe
- chest pain, tightness or heaviness
- confusion or cannot think clearly



## Follow-up Appointments and Care

Before you leave the hospital, an appointment will be made for you with your cardiologist (heart doctor) or family doctor. This appointment is important so your doctor can listen to your heart and lungs to be sure you are doing ok.

Please bring all of your medicine bottles, weight calendar and this heart failure book with you every time you go to any doctor's office.

## Frequently Asked Questions

**Q: Who do I call for my medicine?**

**A:** You will get prescriptions for medicine before you leave the hospital. Take only the medicines listed on your discharge papers. Your heart doctor or your family doctor can handle medicine questions.

**Q: Am I going to die soon?**

**A:** Heart failure is a serious illness that can affect how long you live. This is a chronic disease. It will never go away or be cured. Some people with heart failure will die sooner than others. With proper medicines in the right doses and careful management, you can live longer and feel better.

**Q: Why do I have heart failure?**

**A:** Heart failure usually starts when another problem makes the heart weak or stiff so it does not pump or fill normally. A common cause of heart failure is a heart attack. Other causes include high blood pressure, diabetes, lung disease, problems with the heart valves, and infection of the heart muscle. Drinking too much alcohol for a long time can also cause heart failure. There can be a history of heart failure in some families. Sometimes the exact cause of heart failure is not known.

**Q: Will I have to take heart medicine forever?**

**A:** Yes. Research shows that heart failure medicines can help keep the heart function stable for a long time. Heart failure medicine can also help people live longer, have fewer problems, breathe easier, have more energy, have less swelling, and stay out of the hospital. Different medicines help the heart in different ways. Some medicine may change over time depending on how the heart is coping. At times, the dose of a medicine needs to be adjusted to help the heart.

**Q: Should I get a flu shot or the pneumonia vaccine?**

**A:** The goal of heart failure treatment is to stay well. One way to do this is to avoid getting the flu or pneumonia. Get a flu shot every year. Ask your doctor if you should get a pneumonia vaccine.

**Q: Can I drink alcohol?**

**A:** Alcohol can damage the cells of the heart and make it harder for the heart to pump. In heart failure, the heart is already having trouble pumping. It is better to drink very little or not to drink any alcohol.

**Q: Do I have any movement limits?**

**A:** One of the most important ways that people with heart failure can keep feeling good is to keep active. Research shows that activity including exercise, work and sex is healthy and safe for most people with heart failure. The doctor may limit the amount of weight you can lift or the kinds of things you can do.

**Q: Which doctor will take care of me when I leave the hospital?**

**A:** When you leave the hospital, it is best that your doctor or the doctor's staff check you within a week to make sure that you are getting better as expected. This doctor appointment can be made with either your heart doctor or your family doctor.

## Medicines

The following medicines are often ordered for patients who have heart problems. Each section has information about the medications and side effects. It is important to learn your medicines and know why you are taking them.

### General Guidelines

- Keep a complete list of your medicines with you including herbal supplements, prescription and over-the-counter medicines. You will need to list the drug name, dose (how much you take) and how often you take it. Please update this list every time you go to the doctor, hospital or emergency room.
- Get your medicine from one pharmacy. This is to prevent harmful drug interactions.
- Tell your doctors about any changes in your medicines. This includes starting or stopping any medicines.
- Take your medicines as ordered by your doctor. If you miss a dose, do not double up on the next dose.
- Call your doctor if you have serious side effects from your medicines.

### Blood Thinners such as Warfarin (Coumadin®)

Warfarin (Coumadin®) prevents blood clots from forming or growing larger. This medicine is often used for patients with atrial fibrillation and patients who have had valve surgery. Patients with these conditions are at risk for developing a clot.

Your doctor or pharmacist will decide how much warfarin (Coumadin®) you need (your dose) by a blood test. Your results are reported as an International Normalized Ratio (INR). Your dose may change based on your INR or other risk factors. At first, you will need frequent blood tests. Once you are on a stable dose, you will need the tests less often. Your doctor or pharmacist will decide how often.

Several things may affect your INR. These include sickness, changes in diet or activity and taking other medicines. Both prescription and over-the-counter medicines such as ibuprofen (Motrin®, Advil®) or acetaminophen (Tylenol®) can affect your INR. Try to keep a consistent diet. Tell your doctor or pharmacist about any NEW medicines, such as an antibiotic that you are taking.

Warfarin (Coumadin®) has side effects and reactions that can cause bleeding. Warfarin (Coumadin®) may turn your urine red-orange. This is usually harmless. Other side effects include headache, upset stomach, diarrhea, fever and skin rash.

Call your doctor immediately if you have:

- blood in your urine or other unusual bleeding
- bruising
- black or bloody stools
- tiredness
- dizziness
- unexplained fever
- chills
- sore throat
- stomach pain

### **Antiarrhythmics such as Amiodarone (Cordarone®)**

Amiodarone (Cordarone®) is used to prevent irregular heartbeats (arrhythmias). Arrhythmias are caused by a problem in the heart's electrical system. This medicine can prevent the return of arrhythmia or lower the risk of arrhythmia in some patients.

Call your doctor right away if you have any of the following:

- dizziness
- fainting
- blurred vision
- seeing halos
- eyes are sensitive to light
- yellowing of the whites of the eyes
- shortness of breath
- bluish skin color

Do not eat grapefruit or drink grapefruit juice while you take this medicine.

Many medicines interact with amiodarone (Cordarone®). Tell your doctor about all other medicines you are taking, especially those for heart conditions and antibiotics. While you are on this medicine, your doctor may recommend a yearly eye exam. Your doctor may also order tests to evaluate your liver function, thyroid and lung function.

**ACE Inhibitors such as Lisinopril (Zestril®), Ramipril (Altace®), Benazepril (Lotensin®), Enalapril (Vasotec®), Quinapril (Accupril®), ARBs (Angiotensin Receptor Blockers) such as Valsartan (Diovan®), Olmesartan (Benicar®), Losartan (Cozaar®), Irbesartan (Avapro®)**

ACE inhibitors and ARBs are used to treat high blood pressure, heart failure and increase survival after a heart attack. They are also used in patients who have a low ejection fraction (EF).

ACE inhibitors increase the blood flow in the kidneys. This helps protect the kidneys for patients who have diabetes. One common side effect is dizziness and light headedness, especially at the beginning of therapy. Other side effects include:

- headache
- diarrhea
- more chance of infection
- sun sensitivity

Call your doctor or go to the emergency room right away if you have:

- swelling of the tongue, lips or nose
- sudden trouble breathing or swallowing

Call your doctor or pharmacist if you have a constant dry cough while you are taking this medicine.

**Beta-Blockers such as Metoprolol (Lopressor®), Toprol XL®, Carvedilol (Coreg®) and Bisoprolol (Zebeta®)**

Beta-blockers work by slowing your heart rate, which results in stronger squeezing of the heart muscle. They are used to prevent heart attacks, especially in patients who have had open-heart surgery. Beta-blockers are also used to treat high blood pressure, heart failure, abnormal heartbeats and chest pain.

Common side effects of beta-blockers include:

- feeling drowsy
- shortness of breath
- diarrhea
- swelling of hands or feet
- feeling dizzy or lightheaded

Do not suddenly stop taking this medicine.

**Calcium Channel Blockers such as Amlodipine (Norvasc®), or Diltiazem (Cardizem®)**

Calcium channel blockers work by slowing the heart rate and opening blood vessels. They are used to treat chest pain and high blood pressure and to prevent atrial fibrillation and rapid heartbeat.

Common side effects include:

- headache
- dizziness
- flushing
- shortness of breath
- muscle cramps
- constipation
- swelling of hands or feet

Call your doctor or pharmacist if you have:

- shortness of breath
- low blood pressure
- dizziness
- irregular heartbeat

**Diuretics: Furosemide (Lasix®), Bumetanide (Bumex®) or Torsemide (Demedex®)**

Diuretics work by increasing the amount of fluid that the body rids. Increasing the amount of urine that is made does this. This increases the number of times you will have to go to the bathroom. You will need to have your potassium level checked when you are taking diuretics. Most diuretics will also take potassium from your body.

Common side effects of diuretics include:

- going to the bathroom a lot
- thirst
- muscle cramps

Please be sure to tell your doctor if you are allergic to sulfa medicines.

**Hyperglycemic Medicines such as Glyburide, Metformin (Glucophage®), Glipizide**

Diabetics may need an increase in medicines when they have heart failure. Monitor your blood sugar as ordered by your doctor. If you use insulin, you should always have a snack before you go to bed.





# Heart Failure Activity Guidelines (Bronson Rehabilitation Services)

## Regular Exercise and Activity

- improves your heart failure symptoms
- increases your energy and staying power
- improves your overall strength, balance and flexibility
- reduces stress, anxiety and tension

## Making Your Exercise Safe for You

Talk with your doctor before starting any new exercise program. Make sure you drink enough water to stay hydrated. Remember to follow your doctor's fluid restriction guidelines. If you are unable to talk while exercising, you may be pushing yourself too hard.

## Avoid These Things When Completing Your Activity:

- Do not take a hot shower after exercise. Instead, "cool off" at least 20 minutes before showering
- Do not exercise while sick. Once you feel better, resume exercising slowly by adding slowly back up to your normal workout levels.
- Do not push yourself to "all out" efforts during exercise.
- Do not stair climb as part of the exercise.
- Do not walk outside if it is really windy.
- Do not walk outside when it is very hot, very humid or very cold.
- Do not walk in areas with lots of hills.

If you feel short of breath, very tired or have chest pain during or after your activity, stop and rest until you feel better. Restart your activities at a slower pace. If the symptoms are not relieved by rest or prescribed medications, call your doctor or 911.

## Rate of Perceived Exertion Scale

*How much effort you **think** you are putting into your activity.*

Make your activity match what you are able to do. Start slow and work up to a 20 to 30 minute exercise program. You can use the rate of perceived exertion scale to help check if you are working at the right pace for you. Exertion is the amount of effort that you are using to do an activity.

### Rate of Perceived Exertion Scale:

0	nothing at all
0.5	just noticeable
1	very light
2	light
3	moderate
4	somewhat heavy
5-6	heavy
7-9	very heavy
10	very, very heavy

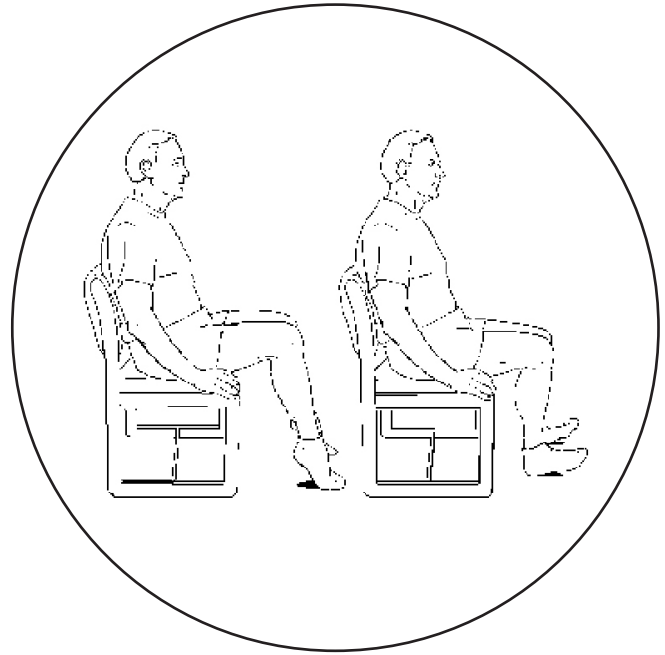
When you exercise, choose the number that best describes your level of exertion on the 0-10 scale. Be sure to include your feeling of shortness of breath and overall fatigue. This will give you a good idea of how hard you are working for your activity. Use this information to speed up or slow down your activity to reach your goal. When you start an exercise program, you may want to keep your level at 2-3, then increase to a level of 3-4 for the rest of the exercise.

# Suggested Types of Exercise

## Warm Up

Includes slow, gentle stretching to all muscles (5-10 minutes)

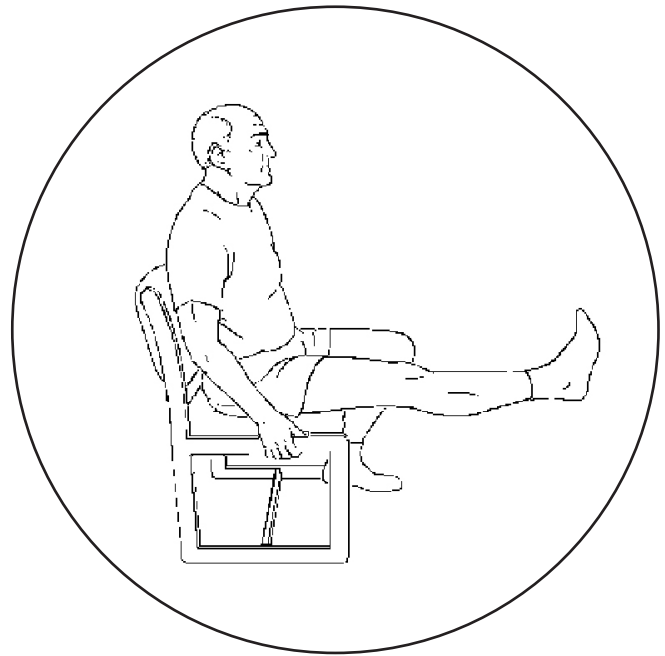
### WHILE SITTING:



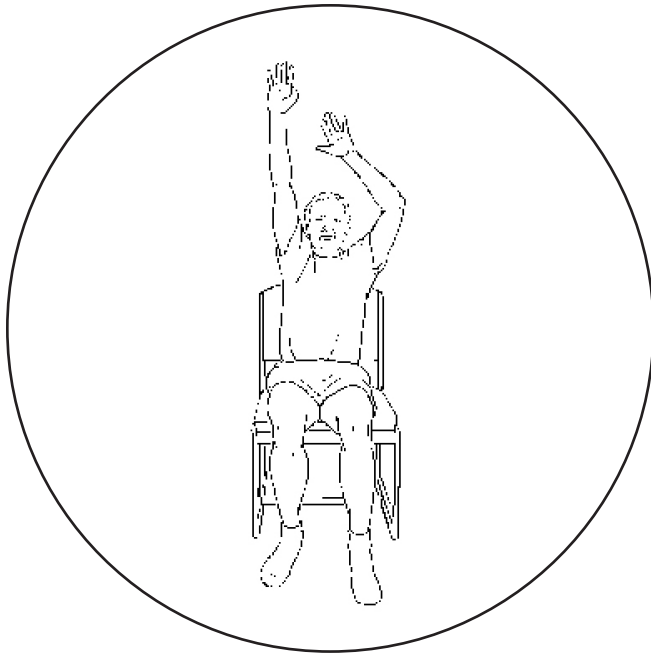
Exercise 1: Pump your ankles up and down.



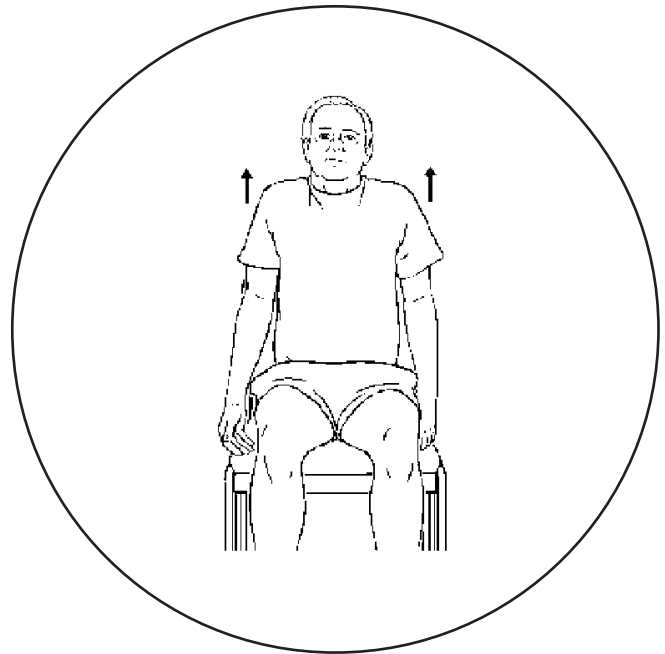
Exercise 2: Raise your knee up toward the ceiling and alternate as if marching.



Exercise 3: Straighten out your knees by extending your legs one at a time and lowering them back to the floor.

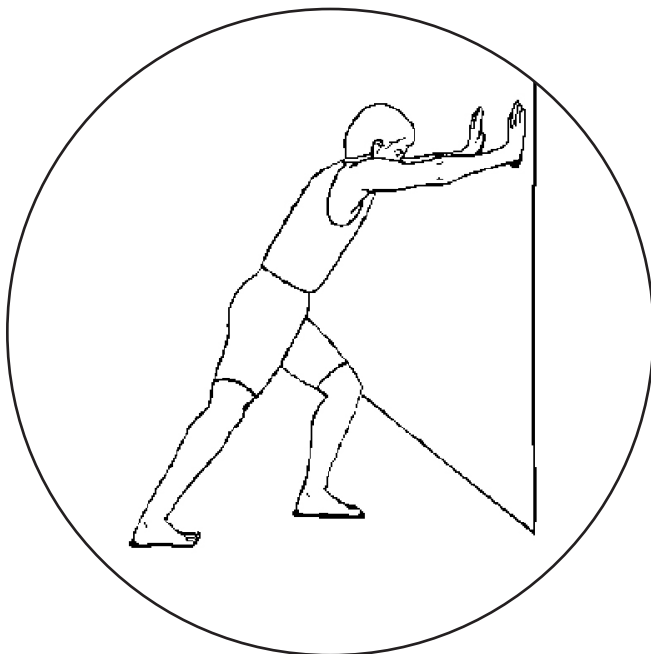


Exercise 4: Alternate both arms reaching up over your head and then slowly bring them back down to your lap.

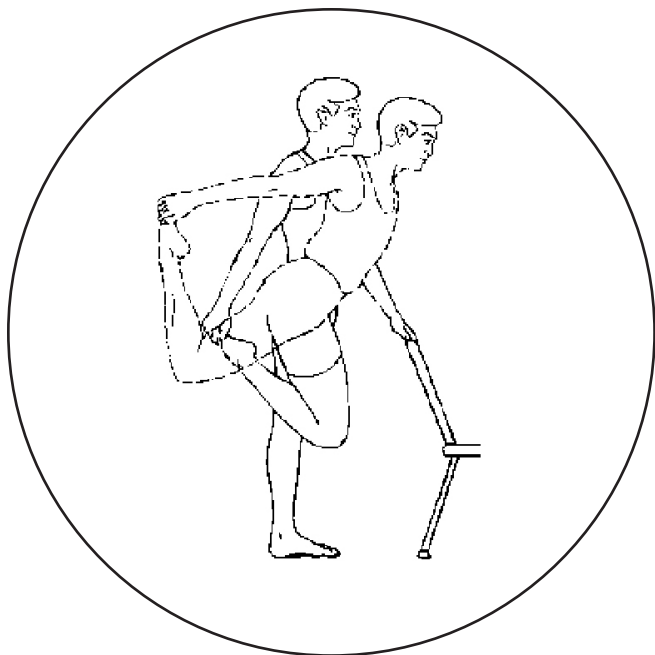


Exercise 5: Lift your shoulders toward your ears and then roll them in a circle.

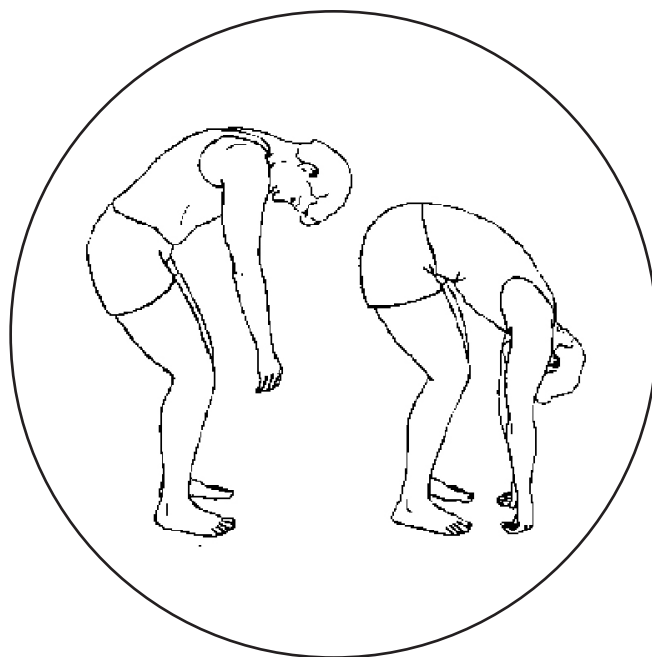
**WHILE STANDING:**



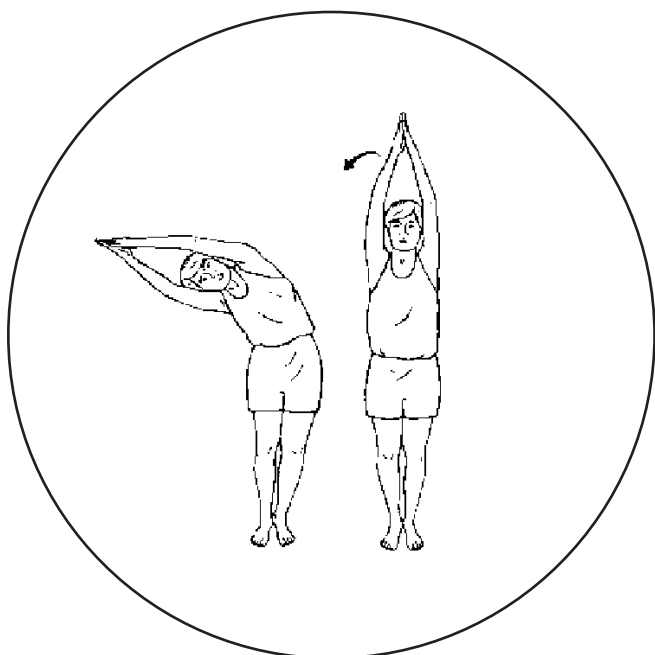
Exercise 6: Stretch your calf muscles by holding onto the wall and placing the leg to be stretched behind you. Keep that foot flat and leg straight as you lunge forward onto the opposite leg.



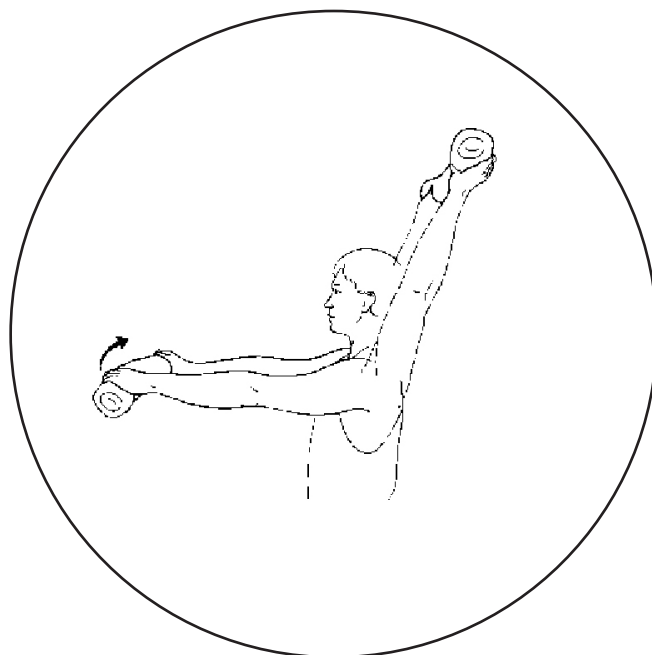
Exercise 7: Stretch your quadriceps by holding onto a chair and bending one knee behind you while grasping your ankle. Repeat with other leg.



Exercise 8: Stretch your hamstrings by placing one foot forward and one back. Lean forward toward the front foot with your front knee bent. Repeat with the other leg.



Exercise 9: Reach one arm over your head and lean to the opposite side to stretch your trunk. Repeat with the other side.



Exercise 10: Extend your arms out in front of you while locking your fingers together and then bring them up over your head.

## Cardiovascular Exercises:

Any exercise designed to safely increase your heart rate which will allow you to strengthen your heart and lungs (10-20 minutes).

- walking
- stationary bike
- water aerobics
- low impact aerobics

## Cool Down:

Slow, gentle stretching to allow your heart rate to come down after exercise and allow your muscles to relax (5-10 minutes).

- repeat stretches from the warm up
- cool down does not mean to sit down or to stop moving

## Signs of Excessive Effort on Your Heart

Evaluate your response to activity. Any activity is too much for you if:

- you become short of breath for more than 10 minutes
- your pulse rate does not return to a resting rate in two to five minutes
- your heart pounds or beats with an irregular rhythm
- you become unusually tired
- you become nauseated or vomit
- you develop severe leg cramps
- you become light headed, dizzy or faint

If any of these symptoms develop, stop what you are doing right away. If they continue, call your doctor.

## Identification Card

Carry an identification card with you at all times, especially when walking.

This card may be cut out and saved or you can make your own.

Name: _____
Address: _____
City/State: _____
Phone: _____
Medical Conditions: _____
Doctor: _____
Doctor Phone: _____
Medications: _____

# Energy Conservation and Work Simplification Techniques

**Work Simplification:** completing a task in the most effective way, using the least amount of effort and the shortest possible time

**Energy Conservation:** using your energy wisely to do the tasks that you have to do and still have energy to do the activities you enjoy

## Main Principles of Energy Conservation and Work Simplification:

Plan ahead:

- Decide what time of day is best for you and plan more things to do at that time.
- Space things to do evenly throughout the day and the week.
- Vary hard and easy tasks appropriately.
- Stay organized - keep all needed items for a task in one place.

Set priorities:

- Decide which tasks are most important.
- Ask others to do some tasks if they are able.
- Take enough time for what you are doing so that you do not have to rush.

Pace yourself:

- Plan rest times in your day (10-15 minutes).
- Many short rest breaks may be better than one long rest break.
- Make sure to stop and rest before you become tired.

Body mechanics:

- Sit, instead of stand, when you can.
- Lift using your legs and not your back.
- Try not to twist – move your feet when turning.
- Carry things close to your body using both hands.

Simplify:

- Limit stair climbing – it takes seven times more energy as walking on flat surfaces.
- Replace heavy items with lighter ones (for example: paper plates instead of china).
- Break up daily tasks into separate steps that can be done throughout the day (for example: soaking dishes before washing).

Equipment:

- Evaluate all areas of your home for equipment that would make things easier.
- Use bathroom equipment if needed.

## Daily Energy Conservation Techniques

### Bathing:

- Place grab bars where needed.
- Gather all needed items ahead of time.
- Put non-skid mat or strips in tub.
- Wash hair in shower to limit bending over.
- After bathing, put on a terry cloth robe to soak up water and pat you dry.

### Consider using:

- bath bench
- handheld shower head
- long-handled sponge
- soap on a rope

### Grooming:

- Keep a chair or stool in bathroom.
- Store all needed items on counter, not under sink.
- Squeeze toothpaste by pushing tube with the palm of your hand.

### Consider using:

- a bucket to store items
- a lightweight hair dryer
- built up handles on brushes, combs and toothbrushes
- an electric toothbrush
- a raised toilet seat

### Dressing:

- Hang shoes up, or use racks.
- Wear front closure bras or fasten back closure bras in front, then turn around.
- Sit to dress lower body.
- Loose fitting clothes are easier to put on and take off.
- Wear pants with elastic waistbands.
- Lower the clothing rod in the closet if clothes are hard to reach.
- Use a reacher, dressing stick, sock aid and long handled shoehorn.

If you have a weak or sore arm or leg, dress that limb first.

## Daily Energy Conservation Techniques (continued)

In the kitchen:

- Set up cupboards so the things you use most are up front.
- Store items where they are easy to reach.
- Get out all supplies before you start a project.
- Sit while you cook or do dishes.
- Slide pots and pans on the counter.
- Put sugar and flour in containers. Scoop out the amount you need.
- Do not lift heavy bags. Put small amounts in more bags.
- Install long handles on faucets and doorknobs.
- Install pull out shelving in cabinets.
- Soak your dishes before washing.
- Wear an apron with pockets to carry utensils or tools.
- Cook in larger quantities and freeze extra portions for later.

Consider using:

- larger-handled utensils
- lazy susans
- electric appliances
- scissors to open packages
- liquid soap dispensers
- both handles on pots and pans
- handheld sink sprayer
- wheeled cart to move several items
- both hands to carry groceries
- put groceries into multiple bags
- a cart to move to car

Shopping:

- Call ahead to make sure the store has the items you want.
- Use motorized carts at store if available.
- Ask cashier to only put a few things in each bag.
- Go to a store that will carry your groceries to your car.
- Write out your list in the order of how the store is setup.
- Call the store ahead of time to reserve a wheelchair.

## Daily Energy Conservation Techniques (continued)

### Laundry:

- Do not make more than one trip up and down the stairs.
- Iron while sitting or wear wrinkle-free clothing.
- Pre-measure small amounts of laundry detergent or use ultra concentrated brands.
- Pin socks together before washing.
- Sit at a table to sort and fold clothes.
- Wash smaller loads to avoid heavy lifting.
- Put basket on a chair to reduce bending when loading and unloading.
- Raise frontloading washer and dryer onto a platform to avoid bending.

### Consider using:

- both hands to lift and move clothes
- both hands to pour detergent
- a wheeled cart to move laundry to and from washing machine
- one hamper for lights and one for darks

### Cleaning:

- Make the bed one entire side at a time.
- Walk with vacuum – keep it close instead of pushing and pulling.
- Store cleaning supplies on both ends of your home or in the room where they will be used.
- Store cleaning products in handy, easy to reach locations.
- Hire someone to do the cleaning or lawn service.
- Throw shower curtain in the wash to clean.
- Clean small parts of your home at a time and take short breaks.
- Get rid of clutter.

### Consider using:

- a lightweight vacuum
- tongs or a reacher to pick up items off the floor
- slow, steady movements
- long-handled brushes, sponges and dusters

### Miscellaneous:

- Take things out of your purse to keep it lighter.
- Ask your pharmacist to not put childproof caps on medications.
- Stop doing tasks that are not important to you.

### Consider using:

- a speaker phone
- automatic garage door opener
- electric scissors

## Dietary Guidelines for Controlling Heart Failure

To avoid fluid weight gain, limit your daily intake of sodium (salt) to around 2000 milligrams. You may also need to limit fluids to six to eight cups each day (48-72 ounces).

### Foods NOT recommended

- salt — including lite salt, kosher salt and sea salt  
Ask your doctor if you can use a salt substitute.
- cottage cheese and processed cheeses: Velveeta®, Cheese Whiz® or anything labeled “processed cheese food”
- regular canned vegetables or vegetables frozen with a sauce
- vegetable juices
- salted crackers, pretzels, potato chips, corn chips, nuts or popcorn
- regular canned or smoked meats, poultry or fish; and processed luncheon meats or deli meats (salami, bologna, bacon, sausage, hot dogs, or ham of any type)
- regular canned soups, bouillon cubes or granules or broth
- frozen dinners
- packaged meals like macaroni and cheese and beef stew
- packaged foods like seasoned noodle or rice dishes and stuffing mix
- instant cooking foods that you add hot water and stir — like potatoes, cereals, noodles and mixes like cornbread and biscuit
- condiments:
  - mustard, regular ketchup, salad dressings, relish
  - sauces like Worcestershire, barbeque, pizza, chili, steak, soy (regular or lite), or horseradish
  - meat tenderizer, monosodium glutamate
  - any seasoning that has “salt” in the name on the label like celery, garlic and onion salt
  - pickles and olives

Rule of thumb to go by:

- limit sodium (salt) intake to a maximum of 600 mg per meal
- do not use foods with more than 300 mg sodium per serving
- limit foods with more than 200 mg sodium per serving
- enjoy foods with less than 100 mg sodium per serving

Remember to keep track of your daily sodium intake. Weigh yourself every morning and write down your weight. If it increases by three pounds in one day or five pounds or more in five days, call your heart doctor or family doctor.

## Keeping Your Heart Healthy with the Therapeutic Lifestyle Change (TLC) Meal Plan

The TLC meal plan is a way of eating that is:

- low in saturated fat, low trans-fat, low-cholesterol
- low in sodium (see basic guidelines on page 24)
- high in fiber

It will help lower your blood fat and lipid levels and help slow down heart disease and other health problems.

To adjust this plan so it is right for you, ask your heart doctor or family doctor for a referral to a registered dietitian. You can also call Bronson Outpatient Nutrition Services at (269) 341-6860.

### **Therapeutic Lifestyle Change (TLC) meal plan guidelines:**

- less than seven percent of the day's total calories from saturated fat
- 25-35 percent of the day's total calories from fat
- less than 200 milligrams of dietary cholesterol a day
- limit sodium intake to 2000 milligrams a day
- maintain a healthy weight
- try to get 20-35 grams of fiber a day

### **Understanding the Terms in Your Therapeutic Lifestyle Change (TLC) and 2000 Milligrams Meal Plan**

#### **Sodium**

- found naturally in all foods
- one teaspoon of salt contains more than 2000 milligrams (mg) of sodium
- sodium is also found in processed, convenience and preserved foods

Sodium can have an impact on heart failure symptoms. Keeping the amount of sodium you eat to 2000 mg per day will better control your symptoms. Making healthy choices in your food can help decrease heart failure problems and help you feel better.

**Fluids**

Cutting back on sodium alone may not be enough to prevent the fluid build-up. Limiting liquids to six to eight cups each day (48-72 ounces) in your diet can also help prevent the body from building up more fluid.

Fluids include:

- water, coffee, tea, milk, juice, soup and soda pop
- solid foods that melt at room temperature, such as JELL-O, ice cream, sherbet, popsicles or ice cubes

**Cholesterol**

Cholesterol is a fat-like substance found in your blood. Your body makes all the cholesterol it needs. Cholesterol is found in all animal foods.

**Saturated Fat**

Saturated fats can increase your blood cholesterol and LDL (“bad cholesterol”) levels. This can lead to cholesterol build-up in the arteries. Saturated fats are found in:

- animal fats, lard, butter, meat fat, chicken and turkey skin, and dairy products
- palm, palm kernel and coconut oils

**Trans-Fatty Acid or Trans Fat**

Trans fats raise LDL cholesterol levels in the blood. They can increase the risk of heart disease. You should avoid trans fats. The amount of trans fat per serving in food is listed on the food label.

**Monounsaturated Fat**

Monounsaturated fats are the “good fats.” They lower LDL (“bad cholesterol”) levels without lowering HDL (“good cholesterol”) levels. Substitute monounsaturated fats for saturated fats in your diet. Good sources:

- Olive, canola and peanut oils, avocado, and nuts (walnuts, hazelnuts, almonds, peanuts, pecans and pistachio nuts)

**Polyunsaturated Fat**

Polyunsaturated fats lower LDL levels and can slightly lower HDL (“good cholesterol”) levels when substituted for saturated fats in your diet. Good sources:

- liquid safflower, sunflower, soybean, corn, cottonseed and sesame oils

# Reading Food Labels

Look for the amount of sodium, total fat, trans fat, saturated fat and cholesterol on the food label.

Serving size  
Servings in package

Here, the label gives the amounts for the different nutrients in one serving. Use it to help you keep track of how much fat, saturated fat, cholesterol and calories you are getting from different foods. Pay attention to the actual amounts (in grams or milligrams). Do not use the percents shown (percent daily value) because they are not based on the TLC diet.

## Nutrition Facts

Serving Size 1 cup (228g)  
Servings Per Container 2

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Amount Per Serving

Calories 250    Calories from Fat 110

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	% Daily Value*
Total Fat 12g	18%
Saturated Fat 3g	15%
Trans Fat 4g	
Cholesterol 30mg	10%
Sodium 470mg	20%
Total Carbohydrate 31g	10%
Dietary Fiber 0g	0%
Sugars 5g	
Protein 5g	

---

Vitamin A 4%    •    Vitamin C 2%

---

Calcium 20%    •    Iron 4%

\* Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet. Your daily values may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs:

		Calories	2,000	2,500
Total Fat	Less than	65g	80g	
Sat Fat	Less than	20g	25g	
Cholesterol	Less than	300mg	300mg	
Sodium	Less than	2,400mg	2,400mg	
Total Carbohydrate		300g	375g	
Dietary Fiber		25g	30g	

Calories per gram:  
Fat 9 + Carbohydrate 4 + Protein 4

## Helpful Information When Reading Food Labels:

- sodium-free: less than five mg sodium in each serving
- low sodium: 140 mg of sodium or less in each serving
- unsalted, no added salt, without added salt and no salt added during processing
- "Heart-Healthy" does not mean the product is low in sodium. This only means the product is low in fat, saturated fat and cholesterol.

## Suggested Foods for the Therapeutic Lifestyle Change (TLC) Meal Plan

### Meat, Poultry, Fish, Dry Beans, Eggs and Nuts

- Select only the leanest fresh or plain frozen meats, poultry, fish and shellfish. Fish is low in saturated fat and provides healthy Omega-3 oils.
- Choose skinless, white meat chicken and turkey not injected with flavorings.
- Use fresh ground turkey or chicken that is made from white meat.
- Use low sodium canned tuna fish.
- Try meat substitutes like dry peas, beans or tofu.
- Limit egg yolks. Egg whites and egg substitute contain only protein. You can have as many as you like on the TLC meal plan (two egg whites = one whole egg in a recipe).
- Select unsalted walnuts, hazelnuts, almonds, peanuts, pecans and pistachio nuts (1/3 cup is equal to one ounce of meat).
- Use unsalted natural peanut butter.

Not recommended:

- regular canned or smoked meat, poultry or fish
- salt pork, processed meats: lunch meats, bacon sausage, deli meats, hot dogs, ham
- frozen dinners

### Milk, Yogurt and Cheese Group

- Drink skim, ½% or 1% milk.
- Look for natural and hard cheeses that are “fat-free,” “reduced-fat,” “low-fat” or “part-skim.” Remember to be mindful of sodium content.
- Choose low-fat or non-fat yogurt.
- Use low-fat or non-fat yogurt or fat-free cream cheese in recipes

Not recommended:

- instant cocoa mix, instant milk beverages and malted milk
- processed cheeses – Velveeta® or Cheez Whiz®, anything labeled “processed cheese food,” or cottage cheese

**Fruits and Vegetables** — eat three to five servings of each a day

- fresh, frozen or canned fruits  
Check the sodium content of crystallized and glazed fruit and dry fruit.
- fresh, plain frozen or no added salt canned vegetables

Not recommended are regular canned vegetables, vegetables frozen with a sauce, or vegetable juices.

**Breads, Cereals, Rice, Pasta, Grains** — eat six to 11 servings a day

- Choose whole-grain breads and rolls without salt on top.
- Choose unsalted and low-fat crackers, pretzels, air popped or “light” popcorn.
- Choose shredded or puffed wheat, puffed rice, low-sodium cereal, regular or quick cooking cereals.
- Choose dried beans and lentils.
- Avoid biscuits or biscuit mix, waffle or pancake mix, stuffing mixes.
- Avoid prepared meals like spaghetti and sauce, macaroni and cheese, boxed or seasoned rice or pasta dishes.

### **Soups**

- Use bouillon cubes without sodium or canned no-salt added broth.
- Choose no-salt added or low sodium and low fat canned soups.  
Homemade cream or broth soups made with allowed ingredients.
- Avoid regular or reduced sodium canned soups, broths, stews or chili.

### **Fats and oils**

- Choose liquid vegetable oils that are high in monounsaturated fats like canola, olive and peanut oils.
- Use liquid margarines or vegetable sprays in place of stick or tub margarine.
- Choose margarine that lists water and unsaturated liquid vegetable oils as the first ingredients. The more liquid the margarine, the better it is for your heart.
- Avoid butter, lard, fat-back and solid shortenings.
- Use low-fat or non-fat mayonnaise.
- Use vinegar or vinegar and olive oil instead of salad dressing.
- Read the label of low-fat or non-fat salad dressings to control sodium intake.
- Avoid bacon fat, salt pork, party spreads, and vegetable and chip dips.

### **Condiments**

- Choose lemon or lime juice or vinegar.
- Choose spices without salt, fresh herbs, no sodium herb blends, and all types of Mrs. Dash®, McCormick's® no sodium seasonings, garlic or onion powder.
- Use low sodium ketchup.
- Avoid relish and pickles, regular ketchup, regular or lite soy sauce, barbeque or Worcestershire sauce, meat tenderizers and MSG.
- Avoid any type of salt — regular, lite, kosher, seasoned, garlic or onion and salt substitutes unless ok with your doctor.

### **Sweets and snacks**

- Choose fruit as a dessert or snack.
- Choose angel food cake topped with fruit puree or fresh fruit slices.
- Choose frozen, low-fat or non-fat yogurt, fruit ice, ice milk, sherbet, sorbet and popsicles.
- Choose gelatin desserts with lite whipped topping.
- Choose fat-free or low-fat cookies like animal crackers or vanilla wafers.

## **How to Socialize While on the Therapeutic Lifestyle Change (TLC) and 2000 Milligrams Sodium Meal Plan**

- Buffet: Look ahead in line to see what foods are offered and limit the number of high-fat foods you eat - be aware of portion size.
- Potluck: Bring a dish that is low in sodium, fat and cholesterol.
- Parties: Focus on activities rather than on eating and sit away from the area where the food is being served. You will be less tempted to overeat.

Have answers ready to politely say no to high-fat foods. For example, "Thank you, but I couldn't eat another bite. Everything was superb." If you eat too many high-fat foods at a social event, do not feel guilty. Just get back on track the next day. Remember that "Heart-Healthy" foods do not mean they are low in sodium.

## How to Dine Out on the Therapeutic Lifestyle Change (TLC) and 2000 Milligrams Sodium Meal Plan

Go to one of the many restaurants that offer low sodium, low-saturated fat or low-cholesterol menu choices. You should ask for the sodium content of a food item. Do not be afraid to make special requests when you order food.

### Control Serving Sizes By:

- asking for a side dish or appetizer-sized serving
- sharing a dish with a friend
- asking for a half portion
- putting half of the serving in a take-home container

**Watch What You Select from Salad Bars.** Prepared salads and salad dressings are high in sodium and may be high in fat content. Remember that “Heart-Healthy” food does not mean low in sodium. Ask to have gravy, butter or margarine, rich sauces, salad dressing and condiments served on the side. Then you can control the amount of saturated fat and cholesterol you eat. Ask to substitute a salad or baked potato for chips, fries, coleslaw or other high-fat or high-sodium foods and ask to leave the extras off your plate.

**When Ordering Pizza** choose vegetable toppings like green pepper, onions and mushrooms. Ask to go light on the sauce and cheese.

### At Fast Food Restaurants, Go For:

- salads
- grilled, skinless chicken sandwiches
- single-sized hamburgers
- chicken, turkey or roast beef sandwiches
- no cheese
- condiments and sauces on the side

Choose low-saturated fat or low-cholesterol cooking methods. Always remember to ask for no salt used in cooking. Look for terms like:

- steamed
- in its own juice (au jus)
- garden fresh
- broiled
- baked
- roasted
- poached
- dry boiled (in wine or lemon juice)
- lightly sautéed or lightly stir-fried

Limit foods prepared with methods that are high in saturated fat, cholesterol or sodium. Watch out for terms like:

- butter sauce
- fried
- crispy
- creamed
- cream or cheese sauce
- stewed
- basted
- sautéed

## Heart-Healthy Menu Choices on the Therapeutic Lifestyle Change (TLC) and 2000 Milligrams Sodium Meal Plan

### Breakfast

- fresh fruit or small (4-ounce) glass of citrus juice
- whole grain bread, bagel or English muffin with jelly or honey
- whole grain cereal with low fat (½% or 1%) or skim milk
- hot cereal such as oatmeal, Cream of Wheat, grits or hominy with low-fat (½% or 1%) low-fat milk with fruit
- omelet made with egg whites or egg substitute, fresh vegetables and natural hard cheeses
- multigrain pancakes with margarine on the side
- low-fat or non-fat yogurt – try adding cereal or fresh fruit

### Beverages

- water with lemon or flavored non-calorie sparkling water
- skim or low fat (½% or 1%) milk.
- 100% fruit juice, regular or low-calorie, or juice spritzer (half fruit juice and half sparkling water)
- reduced sodium tomato juice
- lemonade
- decaf iced tea or hot tea
- decaf iced coffee or hot coffee with skim or low fat (½% or 1%) milk

### Breads

- Be careful when adding butter, margarine or olive oil to your bread.
- Try to avoid sweet rolls, pastries and high-fat breakfast goodies.

### Appetizers

- shrimp cocktail (limit cocktail sauce — it is high in sodium)
- fresh fruit, fruit cup or fruit juice
- salad with lemon juice, oil or just vinegar for dressing
- grilled vegetables
- raw vegetables with low-fat yogurt dip or fresh salsa
- pita bread with low-fat hummus

**Entrées**

- baked, broiled, steamed, poached or lightly sautéed without added salt
- poultry, fish and shellfish
- vegetarian dishes with pasta, rice and other grains, beans and non-cream sauces
- Limit the amount of added fat.
- Ask for no salt to be used in cooking.

**Salads/Salad Bars**

- fresh greens, lettuce and spinach
- fresh vegetables - tomatoes, mushrooms, carrots, cucumbers, peppers, onions, radishes and broccoli
- beans, chickpeas and kidney beans — ask if they can be rinsed first
- Skip the non-vegetable choices such as deli meats, bacon, egg, cheese and croutons.
- Choose vinegar or oil and vinegar for salad dressing.

**Side Dishes**

- Vegetables and starches (rice, potato, noodles) make good additions to meals if served without added fat or sodium.
- Ask for side dishes without butter or margarine, sauces or salt.
- Ask for mustard, salsa or non-fat yogurt instead of sour cream, butter or margarine.

**Desserts**

- fresh fruit
- low-fat or non-fat frozen yogurt
- sherbet or fruit sorbet (these are usually fat-free and cholesterol-free)
- angel food cake, JELL-O, low-fat or non-fat pudding

**Condiments**

- jams and jellies
- low sodium ketchup
- vinegar, lemon, fresh herbs, spices and no-sodium herb mixtures

# Resources

## Cookbooks

*American Dietetic Association Cooking Healthy Across America*  
by Kristine Napier

*American Medical Association Cookbooks for Healthy Living:  
Healthy Heart Cookbook*

*American Heart Association Live and Learn – Low Salt Cookbook, 2nd Edition*

*Guide to Healthy Restaurant Eating – 2nd Edition*  
by Hope S. Warshaw

*The New American Heart Association Cookbook – 7th Edition*

## Websites

[americanheart.org](http://americanheart.org)

[bronsonhealth.com](http://bronsonhealth.com)

[heartcenteronline.com](http://heartcenteronline.com)

[megaheart.com](http://megaheart.com)

[mrsdash.com](http://mrsdash.com) (*recipes*)

[bd.com](http://bd.com) (*fast food guide*)

[chfpatients.com](http://chfpatients.com)

[nhlbi.nih.gov](http://nhlbi.nih.gov) (*National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute of the  
National Institutes of Health*)

For more information about a low-sodium, heart-healthy diet or to schedule an appointment with a registered dietitian, contact Bronson Outpatient Nutrition Services at (269) 341-6860.





Month:

\_\_\_\_\_

Year:

\_\_\_\_\_

Discharge  
Weight:

\_\_\_\_\_

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Weight: _____	Weight: _____	Weight: _____	Weight: _____	Weight: _____	Weight: _____	Weight: _____
Weight: _____	Weight: _____	Weight: _____	Weight: _____	Weight: _____	Weight: _____	Weight: _____
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Weight: _____	Weight: _____	Weight: _____	Weight: _____	Weight: _____	Weight: _____	Weight: _____
Weight: _____	Weight: _____	Weight: _____	Weight: _____	Weight: _____	Weight: _____	Weight: _____

## CAUTION

**Call your doctor's office if you have one or more of these symptoms:**

- weight gain of three pounds in one day **OR**
- weight gain of five pounds or more in five days
- more shortness of breath
- more swelling of your feet, ankles, legs or stomach
- feeling more tired – no energy
- dry, hacking cough
- harder to breathe when lying down
- feeling uneasy – “you know something is not right”
- dizzy or light headed

## EMERGENCY

**Go to the emergency room or call 911 if you have any of the following:**

- struggling to breathe
- chest pain, tightness or heaviness
- confusion or can not think clearly

Month: \_\_\_\_\_

Year: \_\_\_\_\_

Discharge  
Weight: \_\_\_\_\_

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
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601 John Street  
Kalamazoo, MI 49007

[bronsonhealth.com](http://bronsonhealth.com)