



mercy care

LIVING WELL WITH CONGESTIVE HEART FAILURE

Spring/Summer 2021

Think twice before stopping your medicine

Tempted to stop taking a medicine your doctor prescribed? That's not a good idea, especially if you have heart failure.

Your medicine is a crucial part of your treatment. It protects your heart and helps you lead a full life.

Instead of stopping your medicine, try some of these solutions:

It's hard to pay for my medicine. Let your doctor know. A different drug may work as well but cost less. There are also programs that offer discounted or free medicine. Your doctor may help you find one.

I'm not sure how to take my medicine. Ask your doctor or pharmacist questions like:

- How much do I take?
- What time of day do I take it?
- What do I do if I miss a dose?
- Should I take it with food?
- How do I know if it's working?

It's hard to remember my medicine. It may help to link it to something else you do every day — like brushing your teeth. Ask your pharmacist about pill organizers or other tools that might help too.

I don't like the side effects. Tell your doctor. A different medicine — or dose — might work better.

Sources: American Heart Association (www.heart.org); Heart Failure Society of America (www.hfsa.org)

4 ways to take charge

If you have a chronic condition, take it step by step:

1. Learn all you can about it.
2. Work with your doctor on a care plan.
3. Take your medications.
4. Aim for healthy habits.

Source: Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (www.ahrq.gov)



Watch your weight every day

When you have heart failure, you need to keep an eye on the scale. Sudden weight gain or swelling can mean you are retaining fluid and your condition is getting worse.

Weigh yourself at the same time every day. Ask your doctor when to call about sudden weight gain. For instance, your doctor may ask you to report a weight gain of 2 to 3 pounds in one day or 5 pounds or more in a week.

Watch for swelling. If you notice any new swelling in your belly, legs, ankles or feet, tell your doctor right away.

Treating weight gain and swelling early can help keep it from getting worse. Your doctor might have you:

- Eat less sodium and salt
- Drink less fluid
- Adjust your medicines

Sources: American Heart Association (www.heart.org); Heart Failure Society of America (www.hfsa.org)

Need help? A care manager can tell you more about your condition. They can connect you with a provider too. Call Member Services and ask for the Care Management Department.

Contract services are funded under contract with the State of Arizona. This newsletter contains general health information that should not replace the advice or care you get from your provider. Always ask your provider about your own health care needs.

If you would no longer like to receive this mailing, please call Member Services and ask for the Care Management Department.

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Know the risks of opioids

Opioids are strong pain medicines. They're easy to get addicted to.

If you need help with pain, talk to your doctor about safer options. If you use an opioid, take the smallest dose you can for the shortest time, and ask about Narcan. It could save your life.

Want to be drug-free? Call the National Helpline at **1-800-662-HELP (1-800-662-4357)**.

Sources: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (www.cdc.gov); Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (www.samhsa.gov)

Did you know that you may be able to get Lifeline cell service plus a smartphone at no cost to you? Go to www.MercyCareAZ.org or call Member Services at **1-800-624-3879 (TTY: 711) and ask about the Assurance Wireless Lifeline program.**

Contact us

Mercy Care, 4755 S. 44th Place, Phoenix, AZ 85040
Member Services: **602-263-3000** or **1-800-624-3879 (TTY: 711)**

Monday through Friday, 7 AM to 6 PM

24-hour nurse line: **602-263-3000** or **1-800-624-3879**

www.MercyCareAZ.org

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