Exercise: Show your heart some love

Exercise is good medicine for nearly everyone. If you have heart failure, it can be good for you too.

For instance, exercise may help your heart work better. If you stay active, you’ll likely have more energy. Your daily activities may even be easier.

Getting started can be as easy as 1, 2, 3:

1. **Ask your doctor.** Double-check that it’s safe for you to exercise. Find out what activities are best for you. You may need to start with a supervised exercise program if you have symptoms like shortness of breath.

2. **Choose your moves.** Most activities are good for you, even many hobbies. Be sure to include things that will get your heart pumping, such as walking or riding a bike.

3. **Don’t overdo it.** Start slowly and rest often. Even if you only walk for a few minutes each day, that’s a good start. If that’s too hard, you can begin with chair exercises. Over time, you’ll build the strength to do more.

**Medicines matter too**

Exercise is a great tool to help protect your heart. If your doctor prescribes medicines, they’re just as important. Be sure to take them exactly as your doctor tells you to.

Sources: Heart Failure Society of America (www.hfosa.org); National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (www.nhlbi.nih.gov/)

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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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Three steps to live well with heart failure

More energy. Better breathing. If you’re living with heart failure, those are good goals to keep in sight. They’ll help keep you motivated as you tackle some changes that can make a big difference in how you feel.

These three steps can help you keep your disease from getting worse—and start feeling a lot better.

1. Watch for flare-ups. When your symptoms act up, call your doctor right away. Your doctor can help you feel better—for example, by adjusting your medicine. The sooner you call, the better your chances of avoiding a hospital stay.

2. Weigh yourself every day. Sudden weight gain may be an early tip-off that your heart failure is getting worse. Try to step on the scale at the same time every morning—preferably after using the bathroom. Call your doctor if you gain:
   • Three pounds in one day
   • Five pounds in one week

3. Go easy on fluids. Heart failure makes it more likely that fluid will build up in your body. Ask your doctor how much to drink each day—and whether you need to limit salt (sodium) in your diet too. It can make your body retain more fluid.

Sources: American College of Cardiology (www.cardiosmart.org); American Heart Association (www.heart.org)

It’s not too late!
A yearly flu shot is the best way to protect yourself from the flu. The vaccine is safe and won’t cause the flu. If you haven’t had the flu shot yet, it’s not too late to get it. Ask your doctor or pharmacist.

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (www.cdc.gov)

Three questions to ask your doctor about opioids

Opioids can be dangerous when overused or abused. Before you take an opioid, ask your doctor:

1. Why do I need it?
2. What are the risks?
3. Are there safer options?

Ask about Narcan too. It’s a medicine that could save your life if you overdose.

Need help getting clean? To find treatment near you, call 1-800-662-4357.

Sources: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (www.samhsa.gov); U.S. Food and Drug Administration (www.fda.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.

Caregivers: Seek the help you deserve
If you are a caregiver, ask your loved one’s care manager about their needed services as well as services you might need as a caregiver. For example, you may feel overwhelmed, sad or burned out. The care manager can provide information and referrals for support.