Watch your weight every day

If you have heart failure, you need to keep your eyes on the scale and your legs. 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.** Your provider may ask you to report a weight gain of 2 or more pounds in one day or more than 4 pounds in a week.

**Watch for swelling.** It can cause your pants and shoes to feel tight. If you notice any weight gain or new swelling in your middle and lower belly areas, legs, or feet, tell your provider right away. Your provider may recommend a doctor’s visit sooner than your regular checkups. Be sure to keep all appointments.

Treating weight gain and swelling early can help keep it from getting worse. Your provider might have you:
- Eat less sodium and salt
- Drink less fluid
- Adjust your medicines

*Source: American Heart Association (www.heart.org)*

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**If your doctor prescribed medication for CHF,** it is important to take the medication on a regular basis. Medication can help keep a healthy water balance in the body and reduce stress on the heart.
What to do with opioids you don’t need

Opioids are in the news a lot. One reason is because of the tens of thousands of overdose deaths that happen every year when people misuse these very strong drugs.

You can help end this crisis. Has your doctor prescribed opioids to treat your pain? If your treatment has ended and you no longer need the drugs, don’t keep them around. Never give them to anyone else. Dispose of them properly. Here’s how:

• Find a drug take-back program. These programs collect old medicines and dispose of them properly for you. You can search online for a drug take-back program in your community. The police department might know of one too.
• Ask a pharmacy. They may be able to dispose of the medicine for you.

Remember that unused medicines kept around may end up in the wrong hands. Someone could find and take the medicine that was meant for you and an overdose could occur.

Additional sources: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (www.cdc.gov); National Institute on Drug Abuse (www.drugabuse.gov)

Ask about Narcan

Opioid overdoses kill people. They can be reversed by a drug called naloxone (Narcan). Anyone can give this drug and save a life. From 1996 through June 2014, it saved the lives of more than 26,000 people in the U.S. You will still need to call 911 after you give it, because it will wear off in one to two hours. To learn more, talk to your doctor or pharmacist.

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (www.cdc.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](http://www.MercyCareAZ.org) or call Member Services at [1-800-624-3879](tel:+18006243879) and ask about the Assurance Wireless Lifeline program.

Need help? A care manager can tell you more about congestive heart failure and help you connect with your provider. Call Member Services and ask for the Care Management Department.

Share your concerns

If any part of your care makes you uncomfortable, tell your provider. You can also tell your care manager, Member Services, or the Grievance and Appeals Department — even if it seems small. Your comfort and security are an important part of your care. It’s your health care team’s job to make sure you feel safe.