

Living with Heart Failure

Tools and tips for heart-healthy living

Heart failure happens when your heart weakens and doesn't pump enough blood to your body. It is a chronic condition and lifelong disease that must be managed with medication and ongoing medical care. Fortunately, people with heart failure can live for many years and still enjoy a good quality of life.

Symptoms of heart failure

Many symptoms of heart failure can be mistaken for another condition. These symptoms are often signs of heart failure:

- Fatigue
- Weakness
- Confusion
- Coughing or wheezing
- Swelling in the legs, ankles or stomach

- Difficulty breathing while lying down
- Shortness of breath during daily activities
- Reduced appetite and nausea
- Sudden weight gain

Managing heart failure

Heart failure can be managed by following these steps every day:

- Weigh yourself in the morning before breakfast, write it down and compare it to yesterday's weight.
- Take your medicine, as prescribed.
- Check for worsened swelling in your feet, ankles and stomach.
- Follow a diet that includes no more than 2000mg of salt.
- Keep all healthcare appointments.



Why choose us for your heart failure care

The University of Kansas Health System offers the most advanced heart failure tests and treatments. Our advanced heart failure and transplant program includes a multidisciplinary team of cardiologists, cardiothoracic surgeons and cardiac nurse navigators who work together to identify the best care plan for you. Our services have been recognized for maintaining the highest standards of care. We are the only hospital in Kansas to offer heart transplant surgery for those who need it.

Monitoring your symptoms

It's also important to monitor your symptoms daily. This chart can help you keep track of how you're feeling.

Green zone	Good! Symptoms are under control. If all of these statements are true, your symptoms are under control. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• No shortness of breath• No increase in ankle swelling• No weight gain• No chest pain• No change in your usual activity
Yellow zone	Call your doctor. If you notice any of the following symptoms, call your healthcare provider. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increased shortness of breath with activity• Weight gain of 3 pounds in one day or 5 pounds in one week• Increased swelling in your ankles or legs• Increased swelling in your stomach• Increased fatigue You may need an adjustment of your medications.
Red zone	Call your doctor. Make an appointment. If you have any of the following symptoms, call 913-588-9600 or call your cardiologist or primary care provider. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Shortness of breath at rest or waking up at night feeling short of breath or coughing• Needing an increased number of pillows or needing to sit upright to sleep• Chest tightness at rest• Dizziness, lightheadedness or feeling faint You may need to schedule an appointment.
Emergency zone	Call 911 Call 911 immediately if you have any of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Worsening chest tightness or pain that is not relieved by medication• Severe shortness of breath and a cough with pink, frothy sputum

For more information

To make an appointment or learn more, call **913-588-9600** and ask to speak with our heart failure care team.

