

Discharge Instructions for Cardiomyopathy



Cardiomyopathy means that your heart muscle is not working as it normally should. The heart muscle may become enlarged, thickened, or rigid. This can make the heart weaker. This condition can make it harder to do things that may have been easy for you in the past. But with treatment and some lifestyle changes, you and your healthcare provider can help your heart do its job.

Home care

Work hard to cut the salt from your diet. Here are tips:

- Limit canned, dried, packaged, and fast foods.
- Don't add salt at the table.
- Season foods with herbs instead of salt when you cook.
- When you eat out, ask that the chef not add any salt to your dish.
- Don't eat fried or greasy foods.
- Be careful of bottled beverages. They can contain a lot of salt.

Also check the labels of over-the-counter medicines and supplements. They may be high in sodium. Ask your pharmacist or provider if you need help finding a low-salt product.

Be as active as you can. Ask your healthcare provider what level of exercise is right for you. Tips to get started:

- Simple activities such as walking or gardening can help.
- Find activities you enjoy and make them a priority.
- Cardiac rehab programs can help you reach your activity goals. You exercise while staff closely watches the stress on your heart. These programs may be covered by insurance.

Other tips for home care:

- Limit how much fluid you have each day. Your healthcare provider will tell you how much is safe.
- If you smoke, break the habit. Enroll in a stop-smoking program to improve your chances of success. Join a support group or ask your healthcare provider about nicotine replacement products or medicines to help.
- Take your medicines exactly as directed. Don't skip doses. Don't stop taking your medicines without talking to your healthcare provider first.
- Some over-the-counter medicines and herbal supplements can increase your heart rate or blood pressure. This can put extra stress on your heart. Check with your pharmacist or healthcare provider to see if products are heart-safe and won't interact with other medicines you take.
- Visit your healthcare provider regularly. Mention any problems with your treatment plan. Together you can find a plan that works for you.
- Weigh yourself at the same time each day. The best time is in the morning after you wake up and after peeing. Wear the same clothing each time. Keep a written record of your daily weight.
- Eliminate or limit how much alcohol you drink. Too much alcohol is bad for the heart.

Follow-up care

Make a follow-up appointment as advised.

When to call your healthcare provider

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

- You gain more than 2 pounds in 1 day, more than 5 pounds in 1 week, or whatever weight gain you were told to report by your healthcare provider.
- New or increased swelling in your hands, feet, or ankles

Call 911

Call 911 if any of the following occur:

- New or increased chest pain that doesn't get better with medicine
- New or increased shortness of breath
- Weakness in the muscles of your face, arms, or legs
- Trouble speaking
- Rapid pulse or pounding heartbeat
- Fainting, or feeling dizzy or lightheaded

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