

LIFESTYLE CHANGES	WHY?	HOW?
QUIT SMOKING	Smoking can damage blood vessels, reduce the amount of oxygen in the blood and make the heart beat faster.	Ask your doctor about your options. Many are available including smoking cessation programs, medication and counseling.
LOSE WEIGHT AND MAINTAIN A HEALTHY WEIGHT	Excess weight can put a strain on your heart. Sudden weight gain can indicate fluid retention.	There are many classes and programs available. <i>Ask your doctor before beginning any diet or exercise program.</i>
AVOID ALCOHOL	Alcohol can weaken an already damaged heart.	Choose non-alcoholic beverages. Ask your doctor if non-alcoholic beers and wines are acceptable.
AVOID OR LIMIT CAFFEINE	Caffeine can weaken an already damaged heart. It can increase your heart rate and aggravate palpitations.	Choose non-caffeinated beverages
LIMIT SODIUM	Sodium contributes to fluid retention, which can cause breathing problems and swelling and is bad for high blood pressure.	Limit daily intake to 2,000mg. Don't add salt when cooking or at the table. Read labels on foods and some medications to find low-sodium versions.
EXERCISE	Benefits can include reducing stress, improving energy and improving circulation and blood pressure.	Walking, swimming, and biking are popular activities for people with heart failure. Cardiac rehab programs provide gradual increase in exercise in a supervised setting. <i>Be sure to consult your doctor before starting any new activity or exercise program.</i>
REDUCE STRESS	Tension can increase stress on the heart	Find something that works for you, whether it's exercise, a support group, meditation or spending time with family/friends
TRACK SYMPTOMS	Changes may indicate the need to see your doctor for changes in treatment. <i>Notify your doctor immediately of any sudden changes.</i>	Keep a notebook or diary or have a special calendar just for recording medical appointments and symptoms. Don't rely on memory.
TREAT UNDERLYING CAUSES LIKE HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE AND CLOGGED ARTERIES	Heart Failure has a variety of causes including high blood pressure and coronary artery disease.	Make and keep regular doctor appointments.