

It is important for people with heart failure to monitor their symptoms and understand when to seek help or talk to a doctor. This Action Plan is designed to help patients learn what steps to take when experiencing different symptoms. This plan includes three zones: Green, Yellow, and Red. If you are in the Green Zone, your symptoms are under control. If you are in the Yellow Zone, your heart failure may be uncontrolled. If you are in the Red Zone, you may need to call 911 or go to the emergency room.

This Action Plan was developed using standard heart failure guidelines, but it is important to review it with your doctor. They may have other steps for you to take when symptoms arise.

Green Zone: I feel well today.

- No shortness of breath
- No swelling
- No weight gain
- No chest pain
- No problem keeping up with normal activity levels

What to do:

Continue to:

- Take medications as prescribed.
- Check your weight daily.
- Eat a low-sodium diet (less than 2300 mg of sodium daily, although less than 1500 mg is ideal).
- Keep all doctor appointments.

Yellow Zone: I'm not feeling quite right.

- Weight gain of 3 lbs. in a day or 5 lbs. in 2 days
- Coughing more than usual
- Swelling in feet, ankles, legs, or abdomen
- Hard to breathe when lying flat or walking
- Easier to breathe by adding pillows or sitting up
- Feeling tired or lacking energy

What to do:

- Call your doctor to report your symptoms and discuss whether your diuretics (also known as "water pills") or other medications need to be adjusted.

Red Zone: I need help now.

- Breathing is more difficult than normal
- Shortness of breath does not go away when staying still
- Chest pain does not go away when resting
- Trouble thinking clearly
- Feeling dizzy or lightheaded, or losing consciousness

What to do:

- Call your doctor to report your symptoms or go to the nearest emergency room (or call 911).

My doctor's name: _____

My doctor's phone number: _____