

My Heart Failure Passport



Name: _____

Please bring this to all follow-up appointments.

My Heart Failure Passport

This Passport will help you take an active part in treating your heart failure. You can use it to:

- › record daily measurements (like your weight, blood pressure, heart rate, symptoms, and how you are feeling). Your health care provider will talk with you about the measurements that are right for you.
- › record any medications you are taking.
- › understand your disease better.
- › learn about the importance of making changes to your lifestyle.

Name: _____

Date of birth: _____

Provincial health card number: _____

Phone: _____

My health care team

Cardiologist (heart doctor): _____

Phone: _____

Primary health care provider (family doctor or nurse practitioner):

Phone: _____

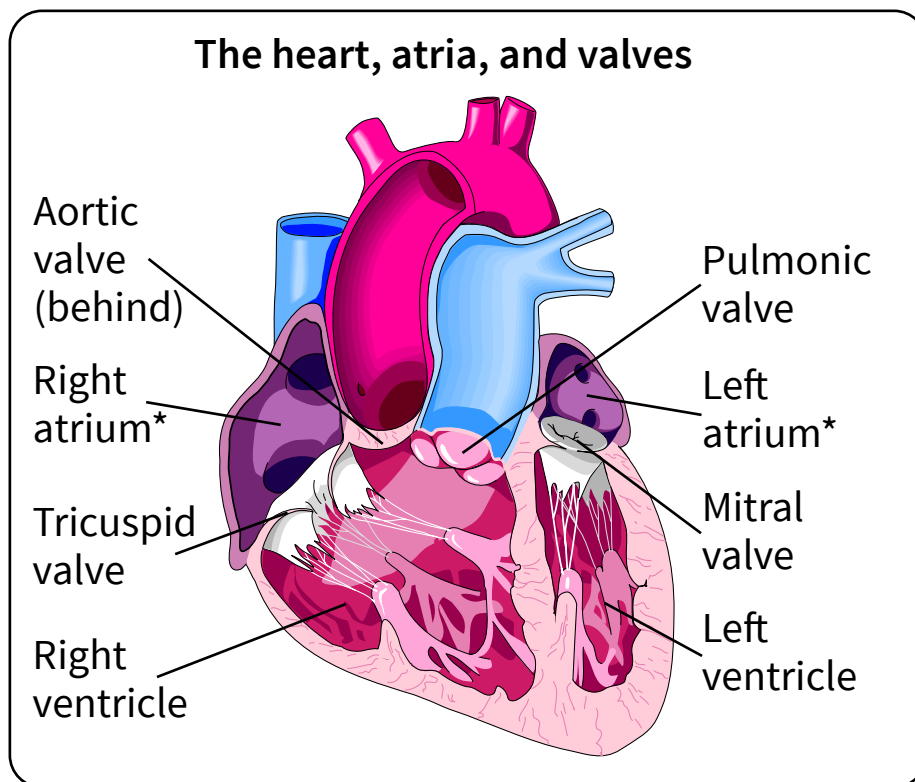
Heart Function Clinic: _____

Hearts in Motion: _____

If it is an emergency, call 911 or go to the nearest Emergency Department right away.

What is heart failure?

- Heart failure happens when your heart is not strong enough to pump blood around your body as well as it should. This means that your body does not get enough oxygen and nutrients to work well. This can lead to lower blood flow and fluid build-up.
- Heart failure may be caused by:
 - › A past heart attack
 - › High blood pressure (hypertension)
 - › Heart valve disease
- Heart failure can be mild to severe (very bad). It is a chronic (ongoing) condition that gets worse over time. There is no cure for heart failure, but treatment and lifestyle changes can help you feel better.



What are the symptoms of heart failure?

- › Edema (swelling)
- › Trouble breathing (out of breath)
- › Tiredness
- › Fast weight gain that does not go away in a few days
- These symptoms are caused by fluid build-up around your lungs. This may be worse at night or when you are lying flat.

How can I help my heart failure symptoms?

You can take an active role in managing your condition. Changes in your lifestyle can have a positive effect on your daily life.

Stop smoking. Smoking can make your heart failure symptoms worse. If you need help to stop, talk to your health care provider.

Avoid alcohol. Drinking alcohol can make your heart failure symptoms worse. If you need help to stop, talk to your health care provider.

Follow heart failure nutrition guidelines.

- Cut back on fluids (like drinks, soups) as told by your health care provider. This is usually 1½ to 2 litres a day.
- Use herbs and spices for flavour instead of salt.
- Have less than 2000 mg of salt a day.
- **Do not** have too much caffeine or alcohol.
- Check for hidden salt (like in processed foods, ready-made meals).
- Eat a lot of fruits and vegetables, low-fat dairy products, and fish.
- Watch for foods with a lot of water (like melons, strawberries, grapes).
- Ask your health care provider or your dietitian for more tips.



Stay active.

- **Talk with your health care provider before exercising.**
- Exercise can help your heart and muscles work better. Always exercise within your limits.
- Keep up your daily activities (like visiting with loved ones).
- Do gentle exercises (like walking, swimming, yoga) each day.
- Attend your local cardiac rehab or Hearts in Motion program regularly.
- **Talk with your health care team before doing activities that may be more strenuous** (like travel).



My health profile

Weight

- Weigh yourself each day at the same time. It is best to do this when you wake up, before you eat anything, and without clothes. Use the same scale each time.

My healthiest weight is between:
_____ and _____ pounds/kilograms.

Swelling

- **It is important to check for swelling each day in your ankles and legs, and around your waist.**
 - › Press your thumb gently into your skin for a few seconds. If it leaves a dent, you have swelling.
- This may mean you have fluid build-up. This can happen before you see a change in your weight.

Heart rate

- Most blood pressure monitors also measure your heart rate (pulse). You can also measure your heart rate yourself:
 1. Sit quietly for at least 5 minutes.
 2. Hold one arm out with your palm facing up and your elbow slightly bent.
 3. Place your index finger and middle fingers into the groove just off the tendon on the thumb side of your wrist (see image). You should feel your pulse throbbing.
 4. Count your pulse for 30 seconds. Then multiply it by 2. That is your heart rate.



Note: This may not be a good measure if you have been diagnosed with atrial fibrillation.

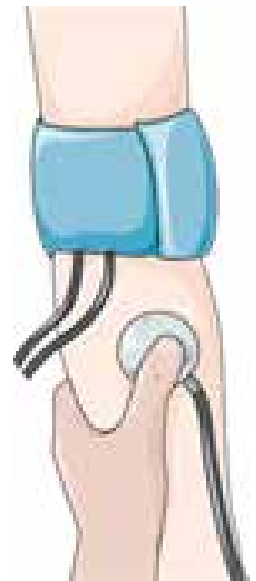
My best heart rate is between: _____ and _____ beats per minute (BPM).

Talk with your health care team if:

- › Your heart rate is higher than _____ BPM for more than 2 days.
- › Your heart rate is lower than _____ BPM for more than 2 days.
- › You feel dizzy or lightheaded, or you faint.

Blood pressure

- You will need a good quality blood pressure machine and cuff that fits well. To measure your blood pressure:
 1. **Do not** smoke, or drink caffeine or alcohol for at least 30 minutes before measuring your blood pressure.
 2. Sit quietly for 3 to 5 minutes.
 3. Sit with your feet flat on the floor, your back and arms supported, and your arm at heart level. Measure your blood pressure in your non-dominant arm (the one you do not write with). **Do not** talk.
 4. Measure your blood pressure 2 times, 1 to 2 minutes apart. Record only the second measurement.
- Measure your blood pressure 1 to 2 times a week at the same time.



My healthiest blood pressure is between:
_____ and _____ mmHg.

Talk with your health care team if:

- › Your blood pressure is higher than _____ mmHg for more than 2 days.
- › Your blood pressure is lower than _____ mmHg for more than 2 days.
- › You have a headache or feel dizzy, or you faint.

Activity

- **It is important to track whether you are able to do your usual activities comfortably** (see page 8). This is not a number. It is a snapshot of how you feel each day.
- This helps your health care team make sure you are getting the treatment that is right for you.



Heart failure medications

It is important to take your medications exactly how your health care provider prescribed them. If you have any questions, talk with your health care team.



Medication	Dose (amount)	When to take	Notes

Other medications

Medication	Dose	When to take	Notes

Symptom tracker follow-up

- Track your symptoms on the following pages. This will help you to know:
 - › When you may need to see your health care team right away
 - › What kind of help you may need

Remember: The phone numbers for your health care team are on page 1.

- Your symptoms are likely under control if you **do not** have:
 - › Trouble breathing
 - › Chest discomfort, pressure, or pain
 - › New swelling or more swelling in your feet, ankles, legs, or stomach (belly)
 - › Weight gain of more than 4 pounds (2kg) over 2 days **or** 5 pounds (2½ kg) over 7 days

Call your doctor or your Heart Function Clinic if you have any of these symptoms:

- › Weight gain of more than 4 pounds (2 kg) over 2 days **or** 5 pounds (2 ½ kg) over 7 days
- › Vomiting (throwing up) or diarrhea (loose, watery poop) for more than 2 days
- › More shortness of breath than usual or trouble breathing while laying down
- › More swelling in your feet, ankles, legs, or stomach
- › A dry, hacking cough
- › More tiredness and less energy to do daily activities
- › Easier to sleep with lots of pillows or in a chair

Go to the nearest Emergency Department or call 911 right away if you have any of these symptoms:

- › Trouble breathing that does not go away while sitting
- › Fast heart rate that does not get slower while resting
- › Chest pain that does not go away with rest or medication
- › Trouble thinking clearly or confusion
- › You faint



My follow-up

Date	Weight	Blood pressure	Heart rate	I felt tired	I felt breathless	How my heart failure affected me today (For example, did it affect my hobbies, my work, my time with loved ones?)

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Appointments

Date	Time	Place	Notes

Ejection fraction tracking

Your health care team may give you information about your ejection fraction. This is a measurement (percentage) of how much blood is pumped out of your heart with each contraction (squeeze).

Date	Ejection fraction (EF)

Feedback

- Help us improve this Passport by filling out a survey. Please use the QR code, the link below, or ask a member of your health care team.
 - › <http://surveys.novascotia.ca/TakeSurvey.aspx?SurveyID=82K25p21H#>



Scan the QR code on your smartphone (open the camera on your smartphone, point the camera at the code, and tap the banner or border that appears)

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Find this pamphlet and all our patient resources here:
<https://library.nshealth.ca/Patients-Guides>

Connect with a registered nurse in Nova Scotia any time:
Call 811 or visit: <https://811.novascotia.ca>

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