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# Congestive Heart Failure (CHF) Patient Oriented Discharge Summary (PODS)

2025

 I came to the hospital on \_\_\_\_\_ and left on \_\_\_\_\_.




- I know why I was in the hospital.
- My essential care partner has a copy of this PODS.
- I have received a copy of the *Living with Heart Failure* pamphlet.  
Scan the QR code or visit:  
  - > [www.nshealth.ca/patient-education-resources/0152](http://www.nshealth.ca/patient-education-resources/0152)
- I have a copy of my Patient Priorities and Goals of Care form.



## Medications

- My list of medications was reviewed with me.
- My approval forms for medication coverage have been submitted.
- My prescriptions were faxed to my pharmacy at: \_\_\_\_\_
- My medications from home were returned to me.
- I will ask my primary health care provider (family doctor or nurse practitioner) or my pharmacist if it is safe to use over-the-counter medications or supplements (like vitamins, herbal products).

## Before discharge, I received:

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <p> <input type="checkbox"/> My morning medications</p> <p> <input type="checkbox"/> My midday medications</p> <p> <input type="checkbox"/> My evening medications</p> | <p><b>Notes:</b> _____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> |
|---|---|

## While I was in the hospital I received:

<p>Flu vaccine</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable</p>	<p>COVID vaccine</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable</p>	<p>Pneumonia vaccine</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable</p>
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- After I go home, I will talk to my primary health care provider or to my pharmacist about keeping my vaccines up to date.



## Care at home

- It is very important to rest before and after any activities.
- Break large tasks into smaller steps. Take breaks often.
- What time of day are you at your best? Do your most demanding activities at that time.



## Home care

- I have Continuing Care set up for when I go home.
- For more information:
  - › Phone (toll-free): 1-800-225-7225
- Scan the QR code or visit:
  - › [www.nshealth.ca/continuing-care](http://www.nshealth.ca/continuing-care)



## Weighing yourself

- Use the same scale. Keep it on a flat surface.
- Wear clothes that weigh about the same each time.
- Weigh yourself when you first get up in the morning, after you urinate (pee), and before you get dressed or eat breakfast.
- Write down your weight each day.



## Exercise

- You should feel recovered 1 hour after exercising. **Stop exercising if you feel:**
  - › More short of breath than usual
  - › Weak or tired
  - › Dizzy
  - › Pain or discomfort
  - › Tightness in your chest
  - › Palpitations (your heart is pounding or racing)



## Eating and drinking

- Eating less salt (sodium) and drinking less fluids will lower the amount of fluid in your body. Salt makes your body retain (hold onto) fluid.
- Limit fluids to \_\_\_\_\_ ml a day.
- Prepare and cook all food without adding salt. **Do not** add salt to your meals at the table.
- Read food labels of packaged foods. Try to choose mostly foods with 5% or less DV (daily value) of sodium on the label. Limit prepared, processed, and convenience foods (like fast food).
- I was given a pamphlet on low sodium eating guidelines.
- I will follow the eating guidelines from my health care team.



### Prevent infection

- **The best way to prevent the spread of infection is to wash your hands often with soap and water or use alcohol-based hand rub.**
- Stay home until you are well.
- Wear a face mask in public places.
- Try to avoid others who are sick.
- Keep your vaccines up to date.



### Smoking

- **The best thing you can do for your health is to stop smoking and/or vaping.**
- When you are ready to quit, call 811 for information about resources to help you quit.



### Sex

- If you have questions about going back to having sex, talk with your health care provider.



### Mental health

- Practice habits to help your mental health (like lowering anxiety and stress) during and after your recovery. For ideas, scan the QR code or visit:
  - › <https://mha.nshealth.ca>

If you are having trouble with your mental health, or alcohol or drug use:

- Mental Health and Addictions Services Intake Service
  - › Phone (toll-free): 1-855-922-1122
- **If it is an emergency, call 911 or go to the nearest Emergency Department right away.**


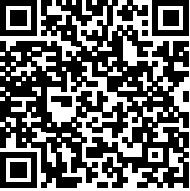









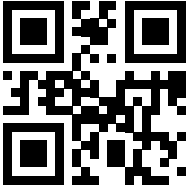




### My appointments:

Who?	Why?	When?	Contact information
Primary health care provider			
Specialist			

Resources

Scan the QR code

	<p><b>Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada: Heart Failure</b></p> <p>› <a href="http://www.heartandstroke.ca/heart-disease/conditions/heart-failure">www.heartandstroke.ca/heart-disease/conditions/heart-failure</a></p>	
	<p><b>Canadian Heart Failure Society</b></p> <p>› <a href="https://heartfailure.ca/">https://heartfailure.ca/</a></p>	
	<p><b>Personal Directives in Nova Scotia</b></p> <p>Have you created and discussed your personal directives and/or advanced care planning for your health goals? Learn more:</p> <p>› <a href="https://novascotia.ca/just/pda/">https://novascotia.ca/just/pda/</a></p>	
	<p><b>Need a Family Practice Registry</b></p> <p>If you do not have a primary health care provider, you can register to be added to the Need a Family Practice Registry:</p> <p>› <a href="https://needafamilypractice.nshealth.ca/">https://needafamilypractice.nshealth.ca/</a></p> <p>› Phone: 811</p>	
	<p>Being on the Need a Family Practice Registry gives you access to <b>VirtualCareNS</b>. They can prescribe medications, order tests, and refer you to a specialist or in-person care as needed:</p> <p>› <a href="http://www.nshealth.ca/clinics-programs-and-services/virtual-care-ns">www.nshealth.ca/clinics-programs-and-services/virtual-care-ns</a></p>	
	<p><b>211 Nova Scotia</b> is a free, confidential information and referral service that can connect you to programs and services offered by local community groups, nonprofits, and government departments across Nova Scotia, 24/7:</p> <p>› Phone: 211</p> <p>› <a href="https://211.ca">https://211.ca</a></p>	
	<p><b>YourHealthNS</b></p> <p>YourHealthNS is a new app that helps you navigate health information, book services, and discover care options, right from your phone or computer:</p> <p>› <a href="https://yourhealthns.ca">https://yourhealthns.ca</a></p>	



## What congestive heart failure zone are you in today?

### Every day:

- › Weigh yourself in the morning before you eat breakfast.
- › Follow your fluid restrictions as told by your health care team.
- › Take your medications exactly as told by your health care team.
- › Check for swelling in your feet, ankles, legs, and arms.
- › Eat foods that are low in salt or salt-free.
- › Balance your activity and rest.

<b>✓ Green Zone: All clear — This is your goal.</b>	<b>What to do:</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No shortness of breath</li> <li>• Usual amount of swelling in your legs or arms</li> <li>• No weight gain</li> <li>• No chest pain, pressure, or discomfort</li> <li>• Able to do your usual activities</li> <li>• Symptoms are under control</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keep appointments with your primary health care provider and the Heart Function Clinic.</li> </ul>
<b>⚠ Yellow Zone: Caution — This zone is a warning.</b>	<b>What to do:</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Weight gain of 2 to 3 pounds in 24 hours (1 day) or up to 5 pounds in 7 days or less</li> <li>• Wheezing sounds are getting worse</li> <li>• Cough that is getting worse</li> <li>• Changes in the amount, colour, or thickness of phlegm (sputum)</li> <li>• Shortness of breath that is getting worse for at least 48 hours (2 days)</li> <li>• More tired than usual</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Call your primary health care provider or the Heart Function Clinic to ask what to do. Your health care provider may need to change your medications.</li> <li>• If you do not have a primary health care provider, you can register to be added to the waitlist (see previous page).</li> </ul>
<b>🚨 Red Zone: Emergency — This means act fast!</b>	<b>What to do:</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Weight gain of more than 5 pounds in 7 days and not feeling well, like:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› More tired than usual</li> <li>› Dizziness, fainting, or falling</li> <li>› Shortness of breath, chest tightness, or wheezing at any time</li> <li>› Shortness of breath that wakes you up</li> <li>› Needing to sit up, go into a tripod position (lean forward and support the upper body with hands on the knees or on another surface), open a window, or use a fan to get your breath</li> <li>› Suddenly more confused or disoriented (not able to think clearly)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Call 911 or go to the nearest Emergency Department right away.</b></li> </ul>

*I acknowledge (accept) that Nova Scotia Health cannot be held responsible for the use, disclosure, storage, and destruction of this information once provided to me, my Substitute Decision Maker, or designate. I acknowledge Nova Scotia Health does not retain (keep) a copy of this form within my medical record and cannot be reissued (printed again) if lost.*

**Signature (Patient/Family):** \_\_\_\_\_

Health care provider: \_\_\_\_\_ (RN)

Date (YYYY/MM/DD): \_\_\_\_\_

This pamphlet is for educational purposes only. It is not intended to replace the advice or professional judgment of a health care provider. The information may not apply to all situations. If you have any questions, please ask your health care provider.

Find all patient education resources here:  
[www.nshealth.ca/patient-education-resources](http://www.nshealth.ca/patient-education-resources)

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

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