



Brattleboro Memorial Hospital
EXCEPTIONAL CARE FOR OUR COMMUNITY

Patient & Family Information

Congestive Heart Failure

This booklet has been written to answer questions that many patients and family members ask about their care during their hospital stay. It explains the experiences you will have while you are here. Using this as a guide, your care will be adapted to your specific needs.

Guide to MEETINGS in the Hospital

Someone from [Cardio-Respiratory](#) will come to your room to talk about your breathing and evaluate your oxygen needs.

A [Nutrition Supervisor or Dietician](#) will come to talk with you about your food preferences and patterns, answer questions you may have, and help you learn to about low sodium foods.

A [Care Manager](#) will help you with any help you may need after you leave the hospital.

A [Physical Therapist](#) may evaluate any activity needs you may have. He or she will work with you to increase activity without making your symptoms worse, and will also help you to learn exercises you can do at home.

Guide to ACTIVITY in the Hospital

You will learn breathing techniques and be encouraged to increase your activity while you are here.

The physical therapists and nurses will work with you on learning to balance your activity and rest. You will be encouraged to be as active as possible.

Your main goal the last days you are here will be to prepare to go home.

Guide to NUTRITION in the Hospital

Your diet will depend on your condition. You may start on liquids if you are very sort of breath, and then advance to solid foods. You will be encouraged to eat 6 small meals per day. A nurse or nutrition supervisor can help you make out the menu for each day, using a 2 gram sodium limit. The sodium restriction will help prevent your body from retaining excess fluid. Your doctor may also want to limit how much fluid you drink.

Guide to TREATMENTS in the Hospital

IV

Fluids and medicines may be given to you through an intravenous catheter, or IV. The IV tubing may be disconnected so that you can move around more freely. The IV catheter will be removed the day you go home.

Intake & Output

While you are here the nurse will measure the amount of fluids you drink and will also measure your urine. You may have a Foley catheter put into your bladder to drain your urine. If you have a Foley catheter, it will be removed and we will make sure you urinate before you go home.

Vital signs

You will be weighed when you arrive and every day in the early morning. Your temperature, blood pressure, pulse, and rate of breathing will be checked every 4 to 8 hours or more often if needed. The doctor and nurse will listen to your heart and lungs every day. You may wear a portable telemetry unit so that your heart rhythm can be watched as you go about your activities.

Oximeter

A clip or wrap will be placed on your finger or earlobe to check the oxygen level in your blood. This will be checked regularly to help decide your oxygen needs. It will help determine if you need oxygen and how much. This will be removed before you go home.

Guide to TESTS in the hospital

Lab tests will be ordered by your doctor. A laboratory technician will draw blood for some of these tests. The first day you are here, your nurse may send a urine sample to the lab. You will also have a chest xray, electrocardiogram (EKG), perhaps an echocardiogram, and repeated lab tests during your stay.

Guide to MEDICINE in the Hospital

You will be given a diuretic to help your body eliminate extra fluids, and medicines to help your heart work better as a pump. You may also have medicines available to help reduce anxiety or pain, and something to help you sleep. Please let your nurses know how you are feeling. Before you are discharged, your doctor will be making decisions about your medicines for home. Be sure you understand what you will be taking at home. If you would like more information about your medicine, tell your nurse.

Guide to LEARNING in the Hospital

Please help us by sharing what you know about congestive heart failure and how you manage at home. We need to know if you have a home scale and are able to use it. You will receive a packet of information to use here and to take home with you. You will learn about this condition and how you can manage it when you leave the hospital.

We will review with you what congestive heart failure is, what causes the symptoms you have had, and what other symptoms you might experience. Please ask questions if you don't understand something.

While you are here you will learn about your medicines and healthy food choices for a 2 gram sodium diet.

It will be important to weigh yourself every day after you leave the hospital. You will learn about the record sheets we have for you to use to write down your weights as well as the signs and symptoms you should report to your doctor. Please take these weight records to your doctor visits.

On the day you leave the hospital, we want to be sure you understand the discharge instructions from your doctor and your plan of care for home, including when to call the doctor and when your next appointment is scheduled. Your nurse and doctor will review your medicines for home. If you have any questions, please ask. Share any concerns you may have so that we can make the move from the hospital to home easy and less stressful.

During your stay you will receive a lot of information. If at any time you have any questions about your treatment, medications or anything else please ask. Best wishes for a speedy recovery!

DAILY WEIGHT

Follow these instructions:

- ◆ Weigh yourself at the same time each day. In the morning before breakfast is the best time.
 - ◆ Wear the same amount of clothing each time.
 - ◆ Empty your bladder before weighing.
 - ◆ Use the same scale each time.
 - ◆ Adjust the scale to the “zero point” each time.
- ◆ If you use a spring type scale, put it on a hard surface, as carpeting may cause it to give wrong number.
- ◆ Keep a written record of your weights *on the back of this sheet* and bring it with you to each doctor visit.
- ◆ Call your doctor if your weight increases 2-3 pounds a day or 4-5 in a week, or you have checked symptoms.

Weight / Symptom Record

Month: _____

Take with you to all doctor appointments

Weigh each day:			Check boxes that apply to you each day:					
Date	Time of Day	Weight	Fatigue	Short of breath or cough	Foot or ankle swelling	Using more pillows to sleep	No problems	
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2								
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