Heart Talk: Six Key Recommendations for Patients with Chronic Heart Failure

Module 3

Communities of Care

QUALIDIGM
Teaching Patients: Guidelines

- Make sure what you teach patients is consistent with their MD’s prescribed plan of care
- Make sure you comply with your state’s licensure regulations and scope of practice guidelines
Key Points

- Heart failure is complex, requiring medications, procedures, and MD visits
- Many people with heart failure have other co-morbidities
- Patients need straightforward, simplified instructions to self-manage
Recommendations

1. Take Medications as Prescribed
2. Ensure Physician Follow-up Appointments
3. Monitor Symptoms and Weight
4. Adapt Diet and Fluids
5. Promote Exercise and Activity
6. Limit Alcohol, Caffeine and Tobacco Use
1. Take Medications as Prescribed
What to Teach Your Patients

Take Medications as Prescribed

- Patients must take their medicines even when they feel well
- Patients who take their medicines live longer, feel better, and spend less time in the hospital.
Helping Patients Comply
Take Medications as Prescribed

- Review medications and how/when to take them with your patients
- Can patients afford their medications?
- How will patients obtain their medications?
Helping Patients Comply
Take Medications as Prescribed

- Consider requesting a pharmacist to review medications
  - Particularly for patients with multiple co-morbidities or a new diagnosis of heart failure
- Consider social worker evaluation in certain cases
Helping Patients Comply
Take Medications as Prescribed

- Review how to refill medications
- Call MD office before finishing pills
- Tell patients to bring their medications or a list of medications to their MD appointments
- Tell patients to notify MD of any potential side effects
2. Arrange Physician Follow-up Appointments
Importance

Follow-up Physician Appointments

- Close follow-up after hospital discharge is critical for maintaining health
- Follow-up physician appointments help patients feel better, live longer, and stay out of the hospital
Helping Patients Comply
Follow-up Appointments

- Schedule before the patient leaves the hospital
- Schedule on the best day and time
- Make sure patients have a ride to their appointments
- Encourage bringing a friend or family member
- Advise patients to bring all medications or an accurate medication list to all appointments
- Encourage patients to ask questions
- Consider social worker evaluation in certain cases
3. Monitor Symptoms and Weight
Monitor Symptoms and Weight

- Classic heart failure symptoms:
  1. Shortness of breath
  2. Edema
  3. Fatigue
Monitor Symptoms and Weight

- Weight gain from fluid occurs up to two weeks prior to symptoms.
- By weighing themselves every day, patients with heart failure can avoid a decline in status.
- Obtaining a daily weight is one of the most important ways for patients with heart failure to stay well.
What to Teach Your Patients

Monitor Symptoms and Weight

- Weigh yourself every morning at about the same time:
  - After urinating
  - Before having anything to drink
  - In the same amount of clothing
  - Same scale

- Notify MD when:
  - 3lb weight gain in one day
  - 5lb weight gain in one week
What to Teach Your Patients

Monitor Symptoms and Weight

By monitoring for symptoms and weight gain, patients can stay free of symptoms and out of the hospital.
How to Help Patients Comply

Monitor Symptoms and Weight

- Don’t assume anything!
- Start with the basics:
  - Ask patients if they have a scale at home
  - Can they see the numbers on their scale?
  - Explain the importance of daily weights
  - Keep a weight chart
  - Bring the weight chart to the MD appointment
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ZONES TO MANAGE HEART FAILURE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>GREEN ZONE</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You have:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- No shortness of breath</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- No weight gain more than 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pounds per day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- No swelling of feet, ankles,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>legs, or stomach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- No chest pain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What to do:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Keep up the good work!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Take your medicine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Eat a low salt diet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
GREEN ZONE

You have:
- No shortness of breath
- No weight gain more than 3 pounds per day
- No swelling of feet, ankles, legs or stomach
- No chest pain

What to do:
- Keep up the good work!
- Take your medicine
- Eat a low salt diet
- Weigh yourself every day
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YELLOW ZONE</th>
<th>You have:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>✔️ Weight gain of 3 pounds in 1 day or 5 pounds in one week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>✔️ More shortness of breath</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>✔️ More swelling in your feet, ankles, legs, or stomach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>✔️ Feeling more tired</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>✔️ New or unusual coughing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>✔️ Dizziness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>✔️ Hard to breathe lying down – need to sleep sitting in chair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
RED ZONE

You have:
♥ Hard time breathing
♥ Struggling to breathe even at rest
♥ Chest pain or discomfort
♥ Feeling faint

What to do:
♥ Call 911 or
♥ Get help, go to Emergency Room
4. Adapt Diet and Fluids
Salt and Water

- Salt = Sodium
- Salt intake will be matched by the body with fluid retention
- High salt intake leads to swelling and heart failure symptoms
- Adhering to a low salt diet helps patients stay out of the hospital
Common Dietary Salt Sources

- Canned foods
- Frozen dinners
- Hot dogs
- Deli meat
Other Dietary Salt Sources

- Sea salt
- Adobo seasoning
- Salad dressings
- Cheeses
- Soy sauce

- Jar tomato/pasta sauce
- Pickles
- Sausages and Kielbasa
- Ham and Bacon
- French fries
How to Help Patients Comply
Adapt Diet and Fluids

• Advise low sodium diet
  • Goal: Less than 2000 mg a day
  • Explain that sodium = salt
  • Review the sources of salt
  • Emphasize that salt leads to heart failure symptoms
• Be sure to speak with the person who buys and cooks food
How to Help Patients Comply
Adapt Diet and Fluids

- Determine patients ability and willingness to comply with low salt eating
  - Can they read labels?
  - Do they understand sources of salt?
  - Can they afford healthy food choices?
  - Are there cultural issues leading to high salt intake?

- Encourage patients to tell MD about their compliance so medications can be tailored

- Consider nutrition consult
How to Help Patients Comply
Adapt Diet and Fluids

- Advise “heart healthy” options when eating out
- Choose baked or broiled foods
- Ask for salad dressing, sauce or gravy on the side
- Order “safe” dishes: baked chicken or fish, steamed vegetables
- Discuss fluid restrictions when necessary
Reading a Label

- Check to see how many servings are listed on the label.
- Eating more than one serving size increases salt intake more than what is listed on the label.
- Nutrition consultation may be helpful.

![Nutrition Facts](image-url)
5. Promote Exercise and Activity
Exercise and Activity

- Specific activity levels must be determined by patients’ physicians.

- **Exercise** is generally safe and often beneficial.

- If appropriate, cardiac rehabilitation is a safe and effective way for patients to get exercise.

- **Sexual activity and driving** is generally safe for most patients.
6. Limit Alcohol, Caffeine and Tobacco Use
Alcohol and Caffeine

- Patients should check with their MD about alcohol and caffeine use
  - Alcohol should be consumed in moderation
    - <2 drinks per day for men
    - <1 drink per day for women
  - Caffeine should be consumed in moderation
    - <1 or 2 cups per day
Why should a patient with heart failure stop smoking?
- Causes heart rate to increase
- Elevates blood pressure
- Carbon monoxide denies heart and brain of oxygen
- Tobacco activates platelets and may trigger blood clots
- Smoking decreases good cholesterol, HDL

Counsel and provide resources for patients to quit smoking
Standardizing Education Across the Continuum

- Patients receive care from multiple settings
  - Hospital, Skilled Nursing Facility (SNF), Visiting Nurses/Home Care, Physician Office
- Each point of care is an educational opportunity
- Consider forming a community team to coordinate care
  - The more patient’s hear the same information, the more likely they will retain the knowledge
**Recommendations**

1. Take Medications as Prescribed
2. Ensure Physician Follow-up Appointments
3. Monitor Symptoms and Weight
4. Adapt Diet and Fluids
5. Promote Exercise and Activity
6. Limit Alcohol, Caffeine and Tobacco Use
For information on the Heart Talk videos, please visit us on our website: www.qualidigm.org or email us at: HeartTalk@qualidigm.org
Credits

The Hospital of Central Connecticut
  • Shelley Dietz RN, MBA
Qualidigm
  • Anne Elwell, RN, MPH
  • Michelle Pandolfi, MSW, LNHA
University of Connecticut Heath Center
  • Wendy Martinson RN, BSN
  • Jason Ryan, MD, MPH
Special Thanks to:

University of Connecticut Health Center

Dr. Jason Ryan for his dedication to teaching us all how to live well with heart failure
This material was prepared in collaboration with Qualidigm, the Medicare Quality Improvement Organization for Connecticut, under contract with the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), an agency of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The contents presented do not necessarily reflect CMS policy. Pub #CT-800100-2011052

The views and opinions expressed here do not reflect the policy or position of the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, nor of Qualidigm. Examples and information provided are for educational purposes only and should not be construed as medical advice. Any person with questions or concerns relating to any medical condition or treatment should consult with a qualified health care professional.