UNC PHYSICIANS NETWORK
UNC HEALTH CARE
CAROLINA ADVANCED HEALTH

Living with Heart Failure
TRACKING YOUR WEIGHT & SYMPTOMS

TRACKING YOUR WEIGHT

A sudden weight gain or a steady rise in weight is a warning sign that your body is retaining too much water and salt. Weighing yourself each day is the best way to monitor fluid buildup. If your weight goes up quickly, call your doctor. You will be given instructions on how to get rid of the excess water, or you may be asked to come in for further evaluation. Reducing the amount of water your body is retaining can help your heart work better.

Tips for Weighing Yourself

- Weigh yourself at the same time each morning, wearing the same amount of clothing.
- Weigh yourself <u>after</u> going to the bathroom but <u>before</u> eating, drinking or taking medications.
- Use the same scale each day. Put it on a flat, hard surface—not on a rug or carpet.
- Do not stop weighing yourself. If you forget one day, start again the next morning. Skip a line on your weight chart if you miss a day.
- Keep your weight chart near the scale so you remember to record your weight daily.
- Record on your weight chart if there were any changes that might have affected your weight (Example: missed medications, increased salt or fluid intake).
- Take your weight chart with you when you go to see your doctor.

Call your doctor if you notice that your weight has increased by:
3 pounds or more in a day
OR
5 pounds or more in a week

TRACKING OTHER HEART FAILURE SYMPTOMS

Other signs and symptoms can also be used to determine whether your heart failure is well-controlled. Tracking these symptoms over time can help you and your doctor determine whether additional lifestyle or medication changes are needed to help better manage your heart failure.

Tips for Documenting Your Symptoms

- Indicate on your weight & symptom chart if you are experiencing any new or worsening:
    - Shortness of breath
    - Cough
    - Swelling (ankles, feet, stomach)
    - Need for more pillows when sleeping / need to sleep sitting up in a chair
- Use your best day (one with no/few symptoms) as a comparison.
- Use arrows or other symbols to indicate changes in your symptoms over time.
  Examples
    - Option 1: ↑ = symptoms have increased, ↓ = decreased, ↔ = no change
    - Option 2: 0 = no symptoms, + = symptoms are mild, ++ = moderate, +++ = severe
- If you feel that any of these symptoms have increased significantly, call your doctor (even if your weight has been stable).

HEART FAILURE: WEIGHT & SYMPTOM CHART

Name ____ Month & Year __________________________

Date	Weight (lbs.)	Blood Pressure (mmHg)	Fatigue	Short of Breath/ Cough	Swelling	Using More Pillows to Sleep	Comments/Concerns