



Your heart isn't just the organ
that keeps you alive.

It's where you keep your family
and friends.

It's what gives you strength
and courage.

It's the force that inspires you.
Your heart is much more than
a muscle.

It's who you are.

At least, that's how we see it.

Welcome to the
Congestive Heart Failure Clinic
At Sherman Hospital

This brochure will help you understand
your care at the hospital and when you
get back home.

Heart Failure?

You have been diagnosed with heart failure. The term "heart failure" sounds scary, but your heart isn't failing in the sense that it will suddenly stop. Heart failure does not mean that you are near death.

Heart failure means your heart cannot keep up with your body's needs for blood flow. Your heart is not working as efficiently as it should.

Your treatment at the Sherman Congestive Heart Failure Clinic, both here at the hospital and when you get back home is aimed toward getting your heart working as well as it can.

During your stay with us your doctors and nurses may need to take care of you with various tests and procedures which may include:

- **Echocardiogram** – its an ultrasound movie made of your heart so your cardiologist can see how efficiently your heart can pump. This is done right in your room so you won't need to go anywhere.

- **Stress Test** – if you have chest pain your cardiologist may need to make sure you did not have a heart attack. If you cannot walk on a treadmill there are new methods where you can remain laying down during the test.
- **Medications** – your doctors may need to make adjustments to your current doses or to add different medications. These will be explained to you.
- **Fluid Balance** – Your doctors and nurses will work with you to reduce the swelling and to make it easier for you to breathe.
- **Diet** – Your doctors, nurses, and dietician will work with you to eat the right foods. You will also learn how to plan your diet when you get back home.
- **Activity level** – If appropriate, a physical therapist will work with you to find the safest activity level tailored especially for you.



Take These Steps to Feel Better!

(and to stay out of the hospital)

Be Aware of Signs & Symptoms

- ✓ Increased shortness of breath with or without activity
- ✓ Shortness of breath that keeps you awake at night
- ✓ Fatigue or weakness or not feeling well for any reason
- ✓ Increased swelling in your legs
- ✓ Sudden weight gain 2 pounds in a day, 5 pounds in a week
- ✓ Chest discomfort
- ✓ Rapid or irregular pulse – monitor your pulse and blood pressure daily – keep a logbook.
- ✓ Chronic cough
- ✓ Loss of appetite

Take Your Medication

- ✓ Take your medications exactly as prescribed by your doctor
- ✓ Take your medications even if you are feeling well
- ✓ Do not skip doses unless instructed by your doctor
- ✓ If you miss a dose resume at the next proper time but do not take a double dose.
- ✓ Tell your doctor about any unpleasant side effects.
- ✓ Keep an accurate medication list and carry it with you.



**Taking
Care
Of You!**

Weigh Yourself Daily

- ✓ Weigh yourself every morning when you get up after urinating and before breakfast.
- ✓ Keep a daily weight logbook.
- ✓ Contact your doctor if you have a weight gain of 2 pounds in a day or 5 pounds in a week – This means fluid retention and worsening CHF!

Rest & Activity

- ✓ Regularly follow physician prescribed exercise program
- ✓ Gradually increase daily activities
- ✓ Avoid fatigue by planning rest periods
- ✓ Avoid significant physical labor or emotional distress – let your body be your guide and don't overdo it.
- ✓ Balance every activity with rest.

Watch Your Diet

- ✓ Avoid adding salt (sodium) to foods.
- ✓ Learn to read dietary labels
- ✓ Avoid food with more than 200 mg sodium per serving
- ✓ Eat fresh fruits and vegetables rather than canned whenever possible – and, don't add salt!
- ✓ Follow your fluid restriction if your doctor recommended this