

Caregiver Assistance News

"Caring for You - Caring for Others"

Area Agency on Aging District 7, Inc.

*Serving Adams, Brown, Gallia, Highland, Jackson, Lawrence, Pike,
Ross, Scioto and Vinton Counties in Ohio*

www.aaa7.org **Helping You Age Better!**



FEBRUARY 2012



February is National Heart Month



The Failing Heart - Signs and Symptoms of Heart Failure

Signs and Symptoms of Heart Failure

Heart failure can cause many symptoms with some symptoms more serious than others. It is important that you and the person in your care are able to recognize these symptoms and know when to call your doctor or nurse, or when to call 911 for urgent help. Noticing these early changes and taking the appropriate steps to manage them may help prevent a more urgent problem from developing or may even prevent a hospital stay.

When To Call the Doctor

It is important to tell the doctor or nurse about any changes in the patient's condition or symptoms, even if they seem small. Small changes may not seem urgent to you, but they can become worse if ignored.

Symptoms to report include:

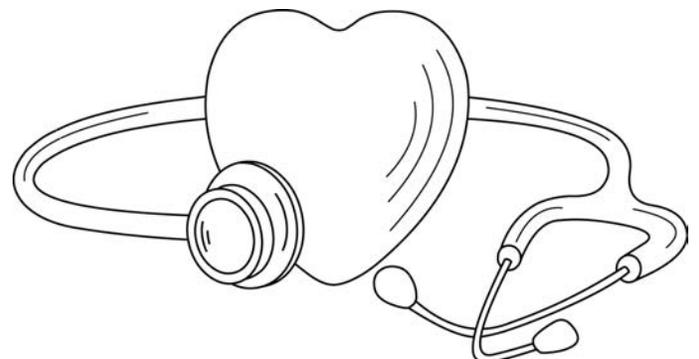
- A weight gain or loss of more than 3 pounds in a 1–2 day period, or 4–5 pounds in a 3–5 day period.
- Swelling in the legs, feet, hands, or

abdomen (Rings, shoes or pants may feel tight with mild swelling.)

- Cough or chest congestion.
- Loss of appetite, nausea and vomiting.
- Increasing fatigue or a sudden decrease in their ability to do normal activities.
- A feeling of fullness or bloating in their stomach.
- Confusion.
- Dizziness, light-headedness or a feeling as if they might pass out.
- Decreased urination or dark urine.
- Chest pain or discomfort during activity that is relieved with rest.
- A newly irregular heartbeat or a faster heart rate than normal.
- Low blood pressure (especially after taking medications).
- Shortness of breath (that is new, becomes

worse or occurs more often, or if it occurs at rest or wakes them from sleep). Observe the number of pillows the person in your care uses to keep from being short of breath during the night. If this increases, report it to the doctor because this might indicate that their heart failure is worsening

The above symptoms are early signs that fluid may be building up or that the heart failure is worsening. It is important to tell the doctor or nurse about them.



New Medications - New Symptoms

It is also very important to let the doctor or nurse know if the person in your care has new symptoms after a new medication is started. They may not be able to tolerate the medicine or dose prescribed, so the doctor will need to make changes that allow for better toleration of the medicine.

If the person in your care is experiencing extreme difficulty, call an ambulance immediately. Some people with heart failure have a sudden change in their symptoms that requires immediate attention, such as sudden onset of shortness of breath or a fainting spell. If you feel it is urgent, **DO NOT WAIT** for the doctor or nurse to call you back - **CALL 911** immediately.



Heart Attack Signs in Women

Women who have had a heart attack recalled having warning signs up to a month before their heart attack. Their unique warning signs were not recognized or were misdiagnosed when they sought medical care. The most common early warning signs are unusual fatigue, sleep disturbance, shortness of breath, indigestion and anxiety.

Source: *Circulation*, 2003, vol. 108

Support Hose

Sometimes heart failure patients have chronically swollen legs. Ask your health care provider to prescribe support stockings to alleviate some of this swelling.

Snow Shoveling Safety

U.S. hospitals treat about 11,500 injuries a year related to shoveling snow. Snow shoveling places heavy demands on the cardiovascular system and can raise heart rates to dangerous levels after only two minutes. Freezing temperatures that constrict blood vessels place more stress on the heart. More than half of injuries resulted from muscle strains and sprains, 20 percent from slips and falls, and nearly seven percent from cardiac problems, such as heart attack.

Source: *American Journal of Emergency Medicine*.



Mark Your Calendar!

Alzheimer's-Related Support Events Coming Up in Selected Locations



Alzheimer's Support Group

Second Monday of Each Month
Traditions and Incare Senior Services
807 Western Avenue
Chillicothe, OH 45601

Please bring your loved one with dementia. Activities and refreshments provided.

RSVP to Carey Dodrill at (740) 779-1240

What Families Need to Know...When the Diagnosis is Alzheimer's Disease or Related Dementia

Caring for someone with memory loss is a 24-hour-a-day challenge. This series of educational sessions provides a special opportunity for families to learn and share together in an informal setting. Topics are presented by experts in their respective fields.

Two-Part Series - March 5 and 12

1:00 pm - 4:00 pm

Briggs Lawrence County Public Library
(2nd Floor Meeting Room)

321 South 4th Street, Ironton

The program is free of charge, but reservations must be made in advance by calling the Alzheimer's Association at 1-800-272-3900.

"If you haven't any charity in your heart, you have the worst kind of heart trouble." - Bob Hope

Taking Care of Yourself - Yoga and the Heart

Yoga's combination of stretching, gentle activity, breathing, and mindfulness may have special benefits for people with cardiovascular disease.

The various postures during a yoga session gently exercise the muscles. Anything that works your muscles is good for your heart and blood vessels. Activity also helps muscles become more sensitive to insulin, which is important for controlling blood sugar.

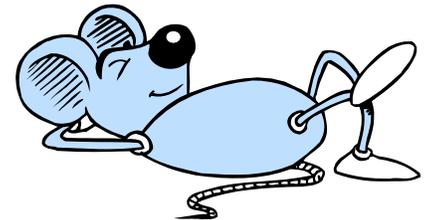
The deep-breathing exercises help slow the breathing rate. Taking fewer but deeper breaths each minute temporarily lowers blood pressure and calms the sympathetic nervous system, which is responsible for generating stress hormones.

People with heart disease often have other health concerns that limit flexibility, such as arthritis. Find a class with a qualified yoga instructor who can meet your health needs and limitations.

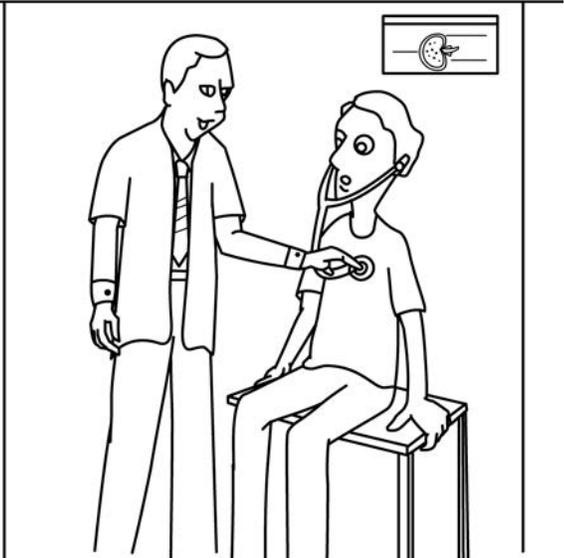


Good to Note

Fatigue is a common symptom for patients with heart failure. Surprisingly, the best treatment for fatigue is physical activity. Remember; however, that the person in your care should not do too much at one time. They should schedule things at varying times throughout the day, in order to alternate between rest and activity.



Live Life Laughing



"Want to hear a funny sound?"

Interested in a Chronic Disease Self-Management Class?

The Area Agency on Aging District 7 currently offers Chronic Disease Self-Management Classes in selected counties throughout our district. For more information, contact Vicki Woyan at 1-800-582-7277, extension 215.

Want to learn more about home and community-based services and how we can help you? Contact the Area Agency on Aging today!

1-800-582-7277 • TTY: 711

e-mail: info@aaa7.org • website: www.aaa7.org





Area Agency on Aging District 7, Inc.

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Your local Area Agency on Aging District 7, Inc. serves the following counties in Ohio: Adams, Brown, Gallia, Highland, Jackson, Lawrence, Pike, Ross, Scioto and Vinton.

Services are rendered on a non-discriminatory basis. Those interested in learning more about the services provided through the

Area Agency on Aging District 7 can call toll-free at 1-800-582-7277. Here, individuals can talk directly with a nurse or social worker who will assist them with information surrounding the programs and services that are available to best serve their needs. The Agency can also be reached via e-mail at info@aaa7.org.

Heart Attack

A heart attack occurs when the blood flow to a part of the heart is blocked, usually by a blood clot. If this clot cuts off the blood flow completely, the part of the heart muscle supplied by that artery begins to die.

Warning signs of a heart attack can be both sudden and intense, or they can start out with mild aches and pains and develop slowly. It is important to be able to recognize these warning signs and report them immediately by calling 911:

- New chest pain or discomfort that lasts longer than 15 minutes and is not relieved by rest or medication.
- Discomfort in other areas of the body (jaw, neck, back or arm).
- Breaking out in a cold sweat, nausea/vomiting or light-headedness.
- Fainting spell or loss of consciousness.

About every 26 seconds, an American will suffer a coronary event, and about every minute, someone will die from one.

Calling 9-1-1 is almost always the fastest way to receive lifesaving treatment. Emergency medical services (EMS) staff can begin treatment when they arrive — up to an hour sooner than if someone arrives to the hospital by car. EMS staff are also trained to revive someone whose heart has stopped. Patients with chest pain who arrive by ambulance usually receive faster treatment at the hospital, too. It is best to call EMS for rapid transport to the emergency room.

Source: American Heart Association

