

# Heart failure: Self-management tool

This leaflet provides advice on how to manage your heart failure symptoms.

## Actions you can take to help manage your condition:

- Weigh yourself at the same time every day - in the morning, after going to the toilet, but before getting dressed or having breakfast. Write your weight down and compare it to yesterday's weight.
- Take your medications as prescribed.
- Check for swelling in your feet, ankles, legs and stomach.
- Ask yourself if your breathing pattern is the same as normal.
- Monitor your fluid intake if recommended by your heart failure nurse or doctor.
- Balance activity and rest - know your limits.



Every day

## Green - Your usual symptoms are under control:

- Your breathing is the same as usual.
- You have no increased swelling in your feet, ankles, legs or stomach
- You have not gained more than 1.5-2kg (3-4lb) in weight in two days.
- You feel able to be as active as usual.
- You are not feeling more tired than usual.
- You have no chest pain.



No action  
needed.  
Continue to  
monitor daily

## Amber - If you have any of the symptoms below stay alert:


- You feel more short of breath than usual.
- Your weight has increased by more than 1.5-2kg (3-4lb) in two days.
- Your feet, ankles, legs or stomach are more swollen than usual.
- You do not feel able to be as active as usual.
- You have a worsening cough.
- You are feeling dizzy.
- You have lost your appetite or are feeling sick.
- You have been vomiting or have diarrhoea.
- Your symptoms continue to get worse even after your diuretics (water tablets) have been increased.



Contact  
your heart  
failure  
nurse or GP

## Red - Seek immediate medical assistance if:

- Your shortness of breath does not improve when you are sitting still.
- You are struggling to breathe.
- You cannot think clearly or are feeling confused.
- You have chest pain that does not go away.



Call 999 or  
call for urgent  
review by  
your GP

## Contact us

If you have any questions please contact your heart failure team, Monday to Friday, 9am-5pm:

Community heart failure nurse team, **t:** 020 3049 4652

Guy's and St Thomas' heart failure nurse team, **t:** 020 7188 9760

King's College Hospital heart failure nurse team, **t:** 020 3299 4860

Princess Royal Hospital heart failure nurse team, **t:** 01689 866 097

If you need help in the evening or at the weekend contact:  
your GP for the out of hours service, or 999 for ambulance services in a medical emergency.

For more information leaflets on conditions, procedures, treatments and services offered at our hospitals, please visit **w:** [www.guysandstthomas.nhs.uk/leaflets](http://www.guysandstthomas.nhs.uk/leaflets)

## Pharmacy Medicines Helpline – Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust

If you have any questions or concerns about your medicines, please speak to the staff caring for you or call our helpline.

**t:** 020 7188 8748 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday

## Your comments and concerns – Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust

For advice, support or to raise a concern, contact our Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS). To make a complaint, contact the complaints department.

**t:** 020 7188 8801 (PALS)      **e:** [pals@gstt.nhs.uk](mailto:pals@gstt.nhs.uk)

**t:** 020 7188 3514 (complaints)      **e:** [complaints2@gstt.nhs.uk](mailto:complaints2@gstt.nhs.uk)

## PALS – King's College Hospital

The Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) is a service that offers support, information and assistance to patients, relatives and visitors. They can also provide help and advice if you have a concern or complaint that staff have not been able to resolve for you. The PALS office is located on the ground floor of the Hambleton Wing, near the main entrance on Bessemer Road - staff will be happy to direct you.

**t:** 020 3299 3601      **e:** [kch-tr.PALS@nhs.net](mailto:kch-tr.PALS@nhs.net)

## Language and accessible support services – Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust

If you need an interpreter or information about your care in a different language or format, please get in touch.

**t:** 020 7188 8815      **e:** [languagesupport@gstt.nhs.uk](mailto:languagesupport@gstt.nhs.uk)

**Leaflet number: 4594/VER1**

Date published: June 2018

Review date: June 2021

© 2018 Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust

A list of sources is available on request