

My Self Care Commitment

- 1. Weigh Myself Daily** I will purchase a scale at any discount store. I will weigh myself at the same time each day using the same scale, record my weight on a weight record and bring it to every doctor's appointment. A weight gain of 3 pounds or more in 1 day or 5 pounds or more in on week means my body is holding in too much fluid.
- 2. Take My Medicines** I will refill my prescriptions one week before I run out. **If I miss a dose**, I will take it as soon as I remember, unless it is almost time for the next dose. If it's almost time to take the next dose, I will skip the missed dose and I will not take a double dose. I will not stop taking my pills unless my doctor tells me to do so. If I quit taking my medicine, I could cause further damage to my heart. I will ask my pharmacist or doctor before taking any over the counter medicines or herbal supplements. I will talk to my doctor if I cannot afford my medication (there are programs available to help).
- 3. Visit My Doctor Regularly** I will follow the doctor's advice about taking care of other related health conditions such as kidney problems, diabetes, high blood pressure, thyroid, cholesterol, or abnormal heartbeats.
- 4. Stop Smoking Now** If I am unable to quit, I will ask my doctor for help. There are medications available to help with the symptoms associated with nicotine withdrawal. Even one cigarette per day, second hand smoke, or chewing tobacco is harmful. I will look for smoking cessation classes in my area such as my local hospital, American Heart Association, American Cancer Society, or American Lung Association.
- 5. Follow My Diet Plan** I will limit Salt/Sodium Intake to 2000 mg per day. I will read the labels and won't add salt to my foods. I will stay away from high salt foods and keep the salt shaker off the table. My doctor may set a limit on the amount of liquid I can have each day. Drinking too many liquids may force my heart to work harder. I should also limit caffeine. Caffeine increases my heart rate and could cause an irregular heartbeat. I will avoid or limit alcohol. Alcohol can slow my heart rate and worsen Heart Failure. It may also interact with my medicine.
- 6. Maintain A Healthy Body Weight** I will ask my doctor or dietitian what weight is right for me. Extra body weight makes my heart work harder.
- 7. Exercise or Walk Every Day** I will ask my doctor for a walking/activity program. I will begin at a very slow pace and short distance, and slowly increase the distance. I will avoid overdoing and weather extremes. I will find a place to walk if the weather is bad such as the mall; use a stationary bicycle, etc. Even walking in place or chair exercises will help me. I will listen to my body and learn to "slow down" or stop and rest between activities.
- 8. Limit Stress** I will find a hobby, laugh, practice deep breathing exercises, watch a good movie or read a good book, pray, meditate, or practice chair yoga. I will discuss stress with my doctor.
- 9. Call My Doctor** If my breathing gets harder, even at rest, or if I become more tired than usual, if I have increased swelling in my feet or ankles, decreased urine production, or gain 2-3 pounds in 1 day or 5 pounds or more in 1 week, my body is holding too much fluid. A cough with congestion or wheezing, abdominal bloating or distention, nausea or a decreased appetite may be additional signs of fluid retention. I will call my doctor with any worsening symptoms, or if I enter the YELLOW ZONE.
- 10. Call 911** If I have severe chest pain, a rapid irregular heartbeat, fainting spells, or enter the RED ZONE, I will call 911.