



mercy care

Living Well with Congestive Heart Failure

Exercise: Show your heart some love

Exercise is good medicine for nearly everyone. Even if you have heart failure, it can be good for you too.

Exercise may help your heart work better. You'll likely have more energy too. Your daily activities may even be easier.

To get started:

1. **Ask your doctor first.** Double-check that it's safe for you to exercise. Find out what activities are best for you. You may need to start with a supervised exercise program if you have symptoms like shortness of breath.
2. **Choose your moves.** Most activities are good for you, even many hobbies. Be sure to include things that will get your heart pumping, such as walking or swimming.
3. **Don't overdo it.** Start slowly and rest often. Even if you only walk for a few minutes each day, that's a good start. If that's too hard, you can begin with chair exercises. Over time, you'll build the strength to do more.
4. Learn more about using the **American Heart Association's Heart Walk app** to track your activity.

While exercise is important, your medicines are too. Keep taking them exactly as your doctor tells you to.

4 ways to take charge

If you have a chronic health condition, take it step by step:

- 1 Learn all you can about it at **www.heart.org**.
- 2 Work with your doctor on a care plan.
- 3 Take your medications as prescribed. Ask your doctor if you have questions.
- 4 Aim for healthy habits like exercise, eating right and getting enough sleep.

If you smoke or vape, ask your doctor for help quitting. Or call the Arizona Smokers Helpline (ASHLine) directly at **1-800-556-6222** or visit **www.ashline.org**. It may take a few tries, but it's one of the best things you can do for your lungs and heart.

Contact us

Mercy Care
4750 S. 44th Place, Suite 150
Phoenix, AZ 85040

Member Services:

602-263-3000 or
1-800-624-3879 (TTY **711**),
Monday through Friday,
7 a.m. to 6 p.m.

ACC-RBHA members with SMI:

602-586-1841 or
1-800-564-5465 (TTY **711**),
24 hours a day, 7 days a week

24-hour nurse line:

602-263-3000 or
1-800-624-3879

Additional contacts:

<https://www.mercycareaz.org/contact-us.html>

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[mercycareaz.org](https://www.mercycareaz.org)

3 steps to living well with heart failure

If you're living with heart failure, more energy and better breathing are good goals to keep. They'll help keep you motivated as you tackle changes that can make a big difference in how you feel.

These three steps can help keep your disease from getting worse.

1. **Watch for flare-ups.** When your symptoms act up, call your doctor's office right away. They can help you feel better, for instance, by changing your medicine. The sooner you call, the better your chances of avoiding a hospital stay.
2. **Weigh yourself every day.** Sudden weight gain may be an early tip-off that heart failure is getting worse. Try to step on the scale at the same time every morning —right after using the bathroom.

Call your doctor if you gain:

- Two to three pounds in one day
- Five pounds or more in a week

3. **Go easy on fluids.** Heart failure makes it more likely that fluid will build up in your body. Ask your doctor how much to drink each day. You may need to limit salt (sodium) in your diet too.

Sources: American College of Cardiology (www.cardiosmart.org); American Heart Association (www.heart.org)



Don't forget!

A yearly flu shot is the best way to protect yourself from the flu. If you haven't had yours yet, ask your doctor or pharmacist.

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Care Management

Need help? A care manager can tell you more about your condition. They can connect you with a provider too. This is a covered service for members with certain health needs. Call Member Services and ask for the Care Management Department.