

Tip Sheet

Getting to the "Heart" of Health Care Costs

How you can keep your heart healthy and contribute to solving the national debt due to less hospitalizations related to heart failure



Dr. Barbara Riegel

1. Heart failure is caused primarily by high blood pressure and ischemic heart disease (coronary artery disease, heart attack)
2. Causes of heart disease are smoking, high blood pressure, diabetes, high cholesterol and triglyceride levels in the blood, obesity, being sedentary, unhealthy diet, and stress.
3. Inadequate sleep is a newly identified risk for heart disease
4. Heart failure means that your heart isn't pumping effectively but you can do things to make it work better:
 - Avoid retaining too much fluid by eating a low salt diet
 - Exercise or stay physically active
 - Take your medicines exactly as prescribed (find a way to remind yourself when medicines are due)
 - Listen to your body:
 - Are you more tired than usual?
 - Short of breath?
 - Unable to walk as far as you could walk previously?

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- Are your ankles swollen?
- Talk with your health care provider about your symptoms. Ask how you should respond to symptoms in the future.
- Do not take a "*wait and see*" in response to symptoms; respond early to symptoms.
- Monitor for early signs that you are retaining fluid:
 - Monitor your weight daily (same time, same clothes)
 - Check your ankles daily for swelling. Are your rings tight? Is your belt tight?
- Limit your salt intake (next session)
- Limit your intake of liquids unless you are sweating a lot

5. Self-care is the key to feeling better!

Notes for Discussion with Your Treatment Team

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