



careforyou

## HEART FAILURE PROGRAM





# How to Check Vital Signs

## AT HOME



# Checking Blood Pressure, Weight, Heart Rate & Breathing Rate

The following pages are from your IHA Healthwise resource library. They have been organized here as a quick guide.

Knowing how to check these vital signs will provide you and your care team with important information. This information helps your team know if your treatment plan is on the right track.

Be sure and keep a log of the numbers & bring any equipment you are using to your doctor appointment. They can check that everything is working properly.

Learning how to take your vitals is an important part of managing your health and staying in control. Great job!

# Blood Pressure

## Using a blood pressure monitor at home

Before you take your blood pressure:

- Don't drink caffeine, smoke, or exercise for at least 30 minutes before you take your blood pressure.
- Empty your bladder before the test.
- Sit with your back straight, such as on a dining chair, with both feet on the floor. Do not cross your feet or legs.
- Rest quietly for at least 5 minutes before you take a reading.
- Do not move, talk, or text while you take your blood pressure.

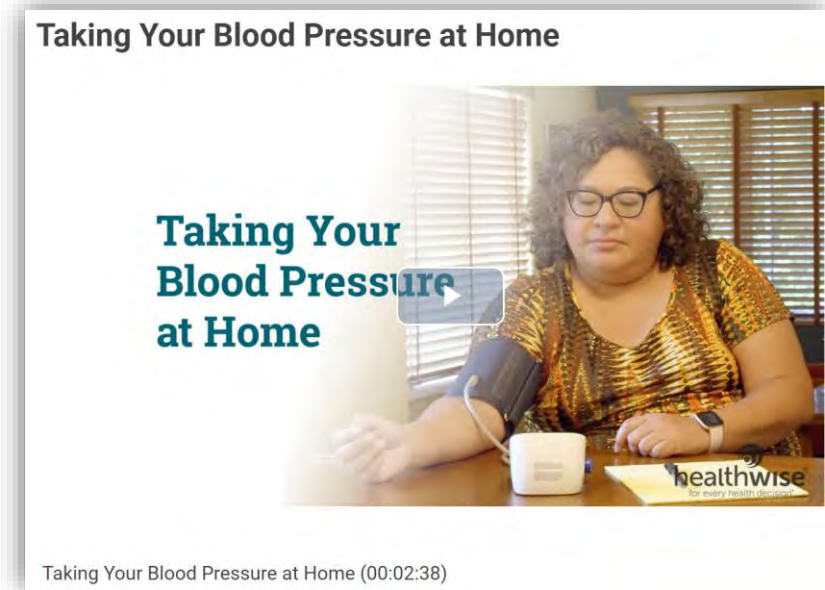
**Take your blood pressure twice a day if your doctor recommends it. Take it in the morning and evening. Here are the steps.**

- 1.Sit with your arm slightly bent and resting comfortably on a table so that your upper arm is on the same level as your heart. Use the same arm each time you take your blood pressure.**
- 2.Wrap the blood pressure cuff around your bare upper arm. The lower edge of the cuff should be about 1 inch (2.5 cm) above the bend of your elbow.**
- 3.Press the on/off button. You may need to wait until the screen says the monitor is ready.**
- 4.Press the start button. The cuff will inflate.**
- 5.After a few seconds, the cuff will begin to deflate. The numbers on the screen will begin to drop.**
- 6.The monitor shows your blood pressure. If your monitor does not automatically save your blood pressure numbers, write them down along with the date and time.**
- 7.Wait one minute and take your blood pressure again.**

Keep a blood pressure diary if your doctor recommends it. Your records may help explain changes in your blood pressure readings and help your doctor make sure you get the right treatment.

Click this link to watch the video

[Taking Your Blood Pressure at Home \(healthwise.net\)](https://www.healthwise.net)







# Weighing

- **Weigh yourself at the same time each day.** The best time is in the morning after you go to the bathroom, but before you eat or drink anything.
- **Use the same scale every time.** Keep it on a hard, flat surface.
- **Wear the same thing every time you weigh yourself.** Or always wear nothing.
- **Record your weight.** Try writing it in a calendar.
- **Share your weight record with your doctor.** It can help show how you're doing and what things may trigger a weight gain.

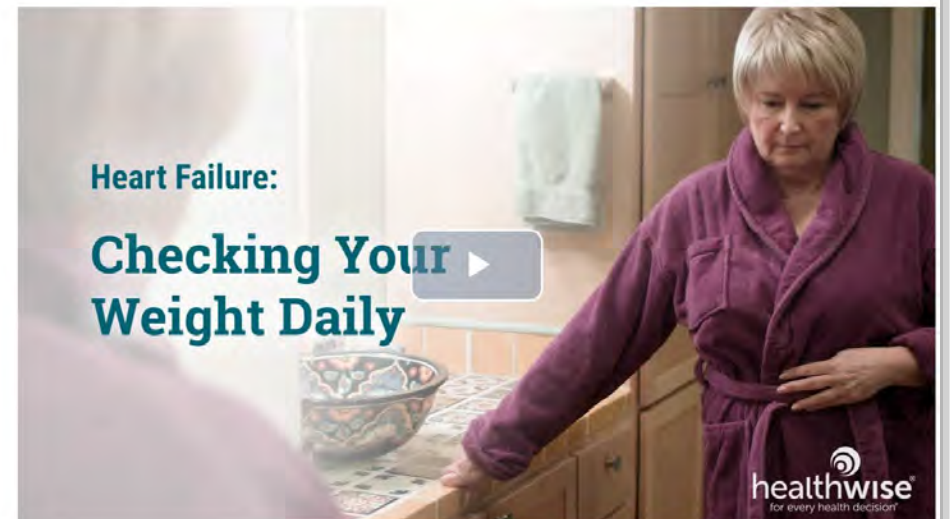
Click this link for the full Healthwise page.

[Heart Failure: Checking Your Weight \(healthwise.net\)](https://www.healthwise.net/heart-failure/checking-your-weight-daily)

Click this link to watch the video.

[Heart Failure: Checking Your Weight Daily \(healthwise.net\)](https://www.healthwise.net/heart-failure/checking-your-weight-daily)

## Heart Failure: Checking Your Weight Daily




Heart Failure: Checking Your Weight Daily (00:01:34)

# Heart Rate (Pulse)

**Taking a pulse (Heart Rate)** ✕

Your pulse is the rate at which your heart beats. As your heart pumps blood through your body, you can feel a pulsing in some of the blood vessels close to the skin's surface.



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**Checking your pulse on the wrist**

You can easily check your pulse on the inside of your wrist, below your thumb.


- Gently place 2 fingers of your other hand on this artery.
- Do not use your thumb, because it has its own pulse that you may feel.
- Count the beats for 30 seconds, and then double the result to get the number of beats per minute.

**Credits**

Author: Healthwise Staff

**Taking a pulse (Heart Rate)** ✕

Your pulse is the rate at which your heart beats. As your heart pumps blood through your body, you can feel a pulsing in some of the blood vessels close to the skin's surface.



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**Checking your pulse in the carotid artery**

You can also check your pulse in the carotid artery. This is located in your neck, on either side of your windpipe. Be careful when checking your pulse in this location, especially if you are older than 65. If you press too hard, you may become lightheaded and fall.

**Credits**

Author: Healthwise Staff  
Medical Review:  
**E. Gregory Thompson MD - Internal Medicine**  
Adam Luzzani MD - Family Medicine

Your doctor will tell you a good heart rate for you. For the full Healthwise page & a video click the link.

[Pulse Measurement \(healthwise.net\)](https://www.healthwise.net/pulse-measurement)

# Breathing Rate (Respirations)

- You will count the same way you did for your heart rate.
- Sit down and try to relax.
- It's best to check when sitting in a chair or bed.
- Measure your breathing rate by counting the number of times your chest or abdomen rises for 30 seconds.
- Double the result for your breaths per minute total.

Some people get anxious counting themselves. Another person can count by watching your chest or abdomen rise also.

Your doctor will tell you what a good rate is for you.





- After you check your vitals, check your Daily Action Plan zone chart. Follow the guidance provided on it to stay on top of your heart failure.

- We are here if you have questions about how to check your vital signs.

HEART FAILURE DAILY ACTION PLAN		
<b>EVERY DAY</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• WEIGH YOURSELF</li> <li>• TAKE YOUR MEDICATIONS AS PRESCRIBED</li> <li>• ACTIVITY AS TOLERATED</li> <li>• LOW SALT DIET</li> <li>• FLUIDS AS YOUR DOCTOR DIRECTED</li> </ul>	
<b>GREEN ZONE</b> <b>EXCELLENT!</b> This is where you want to be.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Your weight is stable. It's not going up or down.</li> <li>✓ You breathe easily.</li> <li>✓ You are sleeping well. You can lie flat without shortness of breath.</li> <li>✓ You can do your usual activities.</li> </ul>	<b>What to do:</b> <b>Keep up the good work!</b> <b>ENJOY YOUR DAY!</b>
<b>YELLOW ZONE</b> <b>BE CAREFUL!</b> Pay Attention Check in with your Doctor.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ You have new or increased shortness of breath.</li> <li>✓ You are dizzy or lightheaded or feel you may faint.</li> <li>✓ Sudden weight gain, 2+lbs in a day or 5lbs in a week.</li> <li>✓ Increased swelling in legs, ankles or feet.</li> <li>✓ So tired or weak you can't do your usual activities.</li> <li>✓ Not sleeping well, shortness of breath wakes you up, need extra pillows.</li> </ul>	<b>What to do: CALL YOUR DOCTOR</b> -call both if not sure which one to call.  PMD Name & Number:  Cardiologist Name & Number:
<b>RED ZONE</b> <b>THIS IS AN EMERGENCY</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Severe trouble breathing.</li> <li>✓ Coughing up pink, frothy mucus.</li> <li>✓ You have a new irregular or fast heartbeat.</li> <li>✓ Heart Attack symptoms-chest pain/pressure, sweating, shortness of breath, nausea or vomiting, lightheadedness or sudden weakness, pain/pressure in back/neck/jaw or upper belly, one or both shoulders/arms.</li> </ul>	<b>What to do:</b> <b>CALL 911</b>

# We're Here For You

- To discuss any of the information contained in this presentation, contact your Care For You Heart Failure Program Nurse
- Thank you for letting us be a part of your Healthcare Team.

