

The “ABC’s of Heart Failure Management

A

Angiotension-Converting Enzyme Inhibitors (ACEI), Angiotension II Receptor Blockers (ARBs) and Angiotension II Receptor Blockers/ Nephilysin Inhibitor (ANRi)

These are medications that cause the blood vessels to relax and widen, lowering blood pressure and making it easier for blood to flow so the heart does not have to pump so hard.

B

Beta Blockers

These are medications that slow the heart rate down and help the heart fill with blood more completely by controlling certain hormones that can damage the heart’s structure.

C

Congestion

Heart failure means that the heart muscle is weakened and cannot pump as well as it should. Therefore, sometimes fluid builds up in the body and creates congestion. This can be seen as extra weight gain, swelling in the feet, legs and abdomen, a cough and increased shortness of breath.

D

Diet

Heart failure patients have specific dietary guidelines that help with symptom control. Salt/sodium intake should be limited to 2000 mg or less per day. It is important to read food labels and choose foods that have less than 140 mg of sodium per serving. Be watchful of excessive fluid intake as this could contribute to congestion. 2000 cc of fluids per day is the recommendation.

E

Education

The most important person in managing your disease is you. It is important that you become educated and informed how to monitor and manage your disease with your specific treatment plan which allows you to live as normal and active as possible. This includes diet, exercise and daily medications.

S

Symptoms

Symptoms may vary throughout your living with heart failure and it is important to recognize signs and symptoms of worsening heart failure early and notify your healthcare provider for direction. Symptoms to evaluate for change are:

- Feeling short of breath with certain activities
- Feeling weak or dizzy
- Tiring more easily
- Feeling like your heart is racing or pounding
- Having swelling in your feet, legs or abdomen
- Coughing or wheezing when you lie down
- Feeling bloated or sick to your stomach
- Weight gain of greater than 2 lbs. over night or 3 lbs. in 3 days