



HEART FAILURE AWARENESS WEEK 2019

C-A-R-E for Patients

Living with heart failure is tough. Health care providers frequently tell you what not to eat, however they don't always tell you what you can eat. There are a lot of medications prescribed, and some can be expensive. Some people worry about side effects from the medicines as well as using the bathroom all the time. Some people get confused as to when to call the provider with symptoms.

The American Association of Heart Failure Nurses (AAHFN) wants you to know that we understand that living with heart failure is complicated and we CARE about helping patients care for themselves. Self-care is one of the most important parts of heart failure management, and one way to reduce the risk of going into the hospital.

The AAHFN has a team called the Patient Education Committee who has put together an easy phrase "CARE" to help keep patients with heart failure. To make it more available, the team has made a wallet card with this phrase and helpful tips. We hope that patients will find this information helpful, and perhaps care providers can use this wallet card as a teaching tool.

C-A-R-E

"**C**" stands for **Connect** with your health care provider. After a hospital stay, it is really important for you to see a health care provider within one week of leaving the hospital. Keep your appointments to see your care providers in clinic. Follow through with labs and procedures. If you do not hear about your results, connect with your provider to find out about your plan. Often your heart failure provider may be able to help you work through issues with simple medication changes, or catch problems early before they get out of hand.

"**A**" stands for **Ask**. Ask questions of your health care providers. Be sure you understand what to do to take care of yourself. Ask questions to help understand your medications: Why do I take this pill? When should I be taking it? How do I take it, with food or without? Ask ANY question you have. You need to know all you can, and understand fully what you need to be doing.

CARE
FOR YOUR HEART





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“**R**” stands for **Report**. Do not be afraid to report your symptoms to your provider, and to be honest about other information. If you ate too much at your cousin’s wedding and now you are more short of breath, it is okay. Report all your symptoms to your provider and what may have caused them. Early symptom reporting helps the doctor, nurse, pharmacist, and the entire health care team make decisions about how to treat you. This is how the provider can help you stay out of the hospital

“**E**” stands for **Engage**. Be an active part of your treatment plan. If something is not working, let the care team know. Look for more information. Take on some physical activity as you are instructed and able, to be a part of making yourself better.

The AAFHN hopes to ease the burdens of living with heart failure as much as we can through helping people living with Heart Failure understand their disease and plan of care. Please visit our [Patient Community](#) page on our website for more helpful tips and ideas! Also, consider joining the [Together in HF](#) community for support and networking with other patients and caregivers.

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