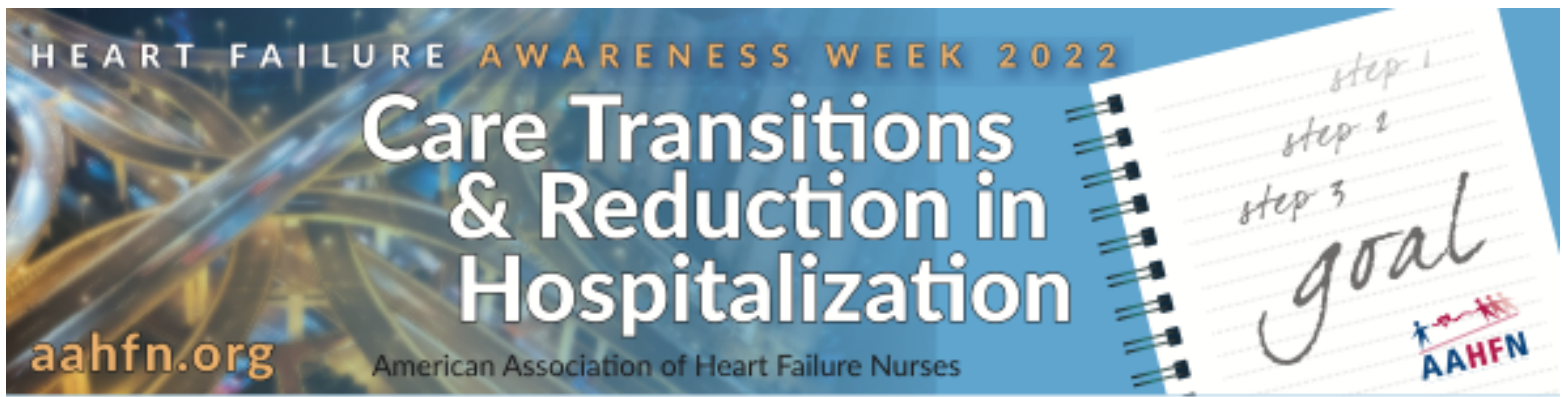




Stress and Heart Failure

Dealing with long-term health issues can be stressful for anyone. Your body reacts to stress by releasing certain hormones that can stress your heart. Managing stress is an important part of managing heart failure. There are likely other issues in your life that are also causing stress in your life, many of them may be things that you are unable to change. Improving your ability to handle stress can also improve your overall quality of life.

Unhealthy Ways to Handle Stress

Many people who are experiencing severe stress deal with it in ways that can make the stress and damage their heart. These include:

- Ignoring the problem causing stress
- Smoking cigarettes or marijuana
- Drinking excessive amounts of alcohol
- Eating large amounts of unhealthy food
- Isolating from family and friends
- Avoiding any form of physical activity

Healthier ways to handle stress

Heart failure has unique problems that other forms of stress don't have. It also requires unique solutions to manage the stress effectively. These include:

- Light exercise like walking, especially outside
- Spending time with the supportive people in your life
- Any type of outdoor activity like gardening, fishing, or outdoor events.
- Religious or spiritual practices like prayer and meditation.
- Breathing Exercises- [Click Here](#) for a YouTube video on breathing exercises
- Talking with your healthcare provider or a counselor
- Attending a heart failure support group
- Finding a hobby you enjoy, like needle point, puzzles, or even something simple like coloring

Heart Failure Support Groups

There is a large national organization of people with heart disease that meet regularly to help support each other. Other people with your disease can understand your problems in ways that even your doctor or nurse will not be able to. The largest network is called Mended Hearts.

You can find a list of their meetings at mendedhearts.org.

If you don't have a chapter in your area, ask your healthcare provider, as there may be another organization in your area.