Heart Failure: Discharge Instructions

1. Medications
   Be sure to go over all of your medications with your nurse before you are discharged.
   - Take all of your prescribed medications.
   - Keep your prescriptions filled. Read the directions on the label.
   - Ask your doctor, nurse or pharmacist if you have any questions about your medications or how to take them.
   - Let your healthcare team know if you cannot afford your medications.
   - Do not change the dose or stop taking any of your medications unless your doctor tells you to. Don't stop even if you feel better.

2. Weigh yourself each day
   - Weigh yourself daily, at the same time, on the same scale, with the same amount of clothing.
   - A good time is in the morning, before breakfast and after you have emptied your bladder.
   - Write your weight down every day. Bring your weight chart with you to the doctors or providers office.
   - Call your doctor or provider if you gain more than 3 pounds in one day, or if you gain 3-5 pounds in one week.

3. Diet
   - Salt is our main source of sodium.
   - Do not add salt while cooking or at the table.
   - Avoid fast foods, cured and processed meats such as ham, salami, deli meats and sausage, and salted snack foods.
   - Canned soups and crackers also have a lot of sodium in them.
   - It is important to maintain ideal body weight. Eat a diet low in fats by cutting out butter, margarine, and eating less red meat and fried foods.
   - Eat fresh foods and foods labeled “low sodium”.
   - Eat more skinless chicken and fish.
   - Eat fresh fruits and vegetables often.
4. **Activity**
   Regular activity is good for you.
   - Check with your doctor before you start exercising.
   - Walking is a good form of exercise. If you feel tired, stop and rest.
   - Plan rest periods throughout the day.
   - Ask your doctor about cardiac rehab.

5. **Doctor appointments**
   - Be sure to keep all of your appointments with your doctor or provider.
   - Write down any questions you may have so you can remember to ask them when you see the doctor.
   - Be sure to bring your medication list and weight log with you to the doctor.

6. **Call the Doctor or Provider if:**
   - It is hard to breathe or you are coughing or wheezing more than usual.
   - You gain more than 3 pounds in one day or more than 3-5 pounds in one week.
   - You see that your feet, ankles, or other parts of your body are puffy or swollen.
   - Your heartbeat changes.
   - You have a fever or "the flu" or increased fatigue.
   - You have any unusual symptoms or problems.
   - You have any questions.

7. **Sleep apnea**
   - If you have sleep apnea and have a CPAP machine at home, please use it!
   - CPAP helps prevent your oxygen level from dropping when you sleep.

8. **Break the Smoking Habit**
   - It is never too late to quit smoking.
   - If you’ve tried before and failed, try again!
   - Most people quit more than once before succeeding.
   - Speak to your provider or call the NYS Quitline at 1 (866) 697-8487 or go to the website [http://www.nysmokefree.com/](http://www.nysmokefree.com/) for more information.

9. **Call 911 for:**
   - Chest pain that does not go away
   - Severe shortness of breath- symptoms **VERY** different than usual
   - Heart racing