

# Triggers & What to Do

## Quick Tips

Understanding what might cause your heart failure to flare-up is an important part of managing the disease and staying well. For example, some people say they feel worse after eating out or drinking too much alcohol, missing their medications, when they have a viral illness, if their diabetes or thyroid disease is not well controlled, when atrial fibrillation kicks in, or during periods of high stress. It's equally important to know what you can do to avoid or head off common triggers.



Use this worksheet to identify those things that seem to make your symptoms worse. For each trigger, identify what you might be able to do and what is helpful in trying to cope with triggers.

Eating too much salt is a common reason for symptoms getting worse. Think of other factors, such as traveling (makes taking medications and daily weights difficult), being overweight (makes the heart work harder) or not getting enough physical activity.

| <b>Trigger:</b>  | <b>Your plan for avoiding or staying ahead of the game:</b>                                   |
|--|---|
| <i>For example, too much salt</i>                                  | <i>Ask for easy ways to cut salt (sodium)<br/>Ask if a nutritionist might be able to help</i> |
| <i>For example, getting the flu or another respiratory illness</i> | <i>Getting a flu shot each year</i>   |
|  |   |

**Some symptoms that might signal worsening heart failure:**

- Shortness of breath even with minimal activity
- Not being able to exercise
- Rapid weight gain
- Difficulty lying flat without being propped up
- Feeling even more tired
- Swelling

*What I most want to ask about or focus on related to possible heart failure triggers:*

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