

# Traffic Lights for Heart Failure

Chest Heart & Stroke Scotland



March 2015

## About Heart Failure

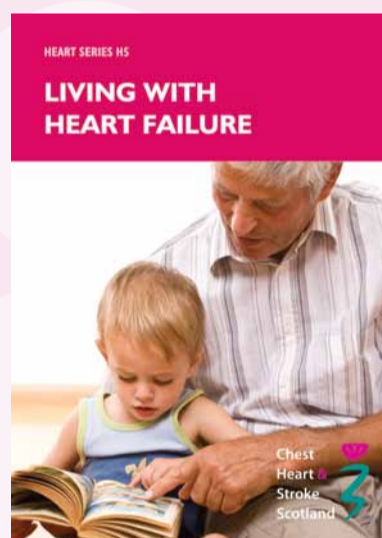
Heart Failure is a rather alarming term but it is commonly used to describe the condition where the heart muscle has become weakened and is unable to pump blood around the body as efficiently as before. In other words the heart muscle

fails to supply enough blood to the body, quickly enough, leading to different symptoms. These symptoms may become noticeable when doing something active but can progress to being noticeable even at rest.

## Chest Heart & Stroke Scotland

- **The Cardiac and Respiratory Support Service** reduces isolation and improves the quality of life for people living with heart failure in their local communities.
- The **Voices Scotland** programme provides people affected by chest, heart or stroke illness with the knowledge, skills and confidence to work with the NHS to help plan new and better services.
- The publications produced by CHSS offer easy to read information and guidance about chest, heart and stroke conditions.

The full range of publications is available by telephoning 0131 225 6963 or at [publications@chss.org.uk](mailto:publications@chss.org.uk) or [www.chss.org.uk](http://www.chss.org.uk)



## My information

My heart failure nurse is

Contact number is

My doctor is

The surgery number is

NHS 24 number: 111

Do you have any questions about chest, heart or stroke illness?



Ask the nurse  
0808 801 0899

\*Call the Advice Line Nurses to sign up for free mobile phone text updates about air quality and weather conditions which may affect your breathing.\*

[www.chss.org.uk](http://www.chss.org.uk)

Scottish Charity Number SC018761

# I feel OK

There is no change to my being able to carry out my normal daily activities.

When you are in the **Green Zone** your heart failure is stable:

- You are at your goal weight
- Your shortness of breath is no worse than usual
- Any swelling of the ankles and stomach is stable
- You do not have any chest pain

The **Green Zone** means that your symptoms are under control. You should:

- Continue taking your medication as prescribed
- Continue daily weights
- Follow fluid restriction as recommended
- Follow a low salt diet
- Keep all doctor appointments

My goal weight is

My normal level of activity is



# I feel I am getting worse

**My symptoms are worse and I don't feel OK.**

You are entering the **Amber Zone** if:

- Your weight has been increasing over the last 2-3 days or you have gained 3-4lbs (1.5–2kg) in the last week
- Your signs and symptoms are becoming 'worse' such as:
  - Increasing shortness of breath
  - Increasing swelling of the ankles, feet or stomach
  - You develop a new or worsening cough, or a cough which is becoming a problem at night
  - You need more pillows to help you sleep
  - You notice some chest discomfort

OR

- You simply do not feel so well.

The **Amber Zone** means you need to take action.

This may include:

- Adjusting your medication to help get rid of the extra fluid
- Adjusting the amount of fluid that you take in drinks and food
- Identifying other things which may be making you unwell, such as an infection

Ask your nurse or doctor to write down the actions you should take here.



# I feel much worse

**I can't do my normal activities without symptoms or feeling extremely tired.**

You are in the **Red Zone** if you have **any** of the following symptoms:

- Your weight has increased suddenly or has not improved after following the advice of your nurse or doctor
- You are short of breath even when you are resting
- You notice a wheeze when you are breathing
- You have chest pain
- You start to feel confused

The **Red Zone** means:

It is time to take **immediate action!**

Speak to your nurse or doctor today.

Tel:

Working Hours:

After office hours call NHS 24 on 111

If you can't wait for the nurse or doctor to call you back or you think it is an emergency dial 999 for an ambulance.

