

# Our Lady of the Lake Regional Medical Center

## Pharmacy Heart Failure Counselling Handout

### What is heart failure

Insufficiency of the heart to pump out enough blood supply to meet the need/demands of the body

### Indications for each medication

The following medications help the heart to maintain adequate blood supply to meet the needs of the body

- **Diuretics** - help to rid your body of excess water that may collect in your hands, feet and lungs. Less fluid to pump eases the workload of the heart.
- **Beta Blockers** – help lower blood pressure and slow the heart rate.
- **Vasodilators** - help blood flow more easily by relaxing the blood vessels and lowering blood pressure.
- **You will be discharged on the following medications....**state patient medications and provide patient with a medication card for each drug.

### Medication dosing and administration

Take each medication dose at the same scheduled time each day. To help you remember to take your medication daily, you can do any of the following

- Put a reminder note by the refrigerator, phone or medicine cabinet. You can use different colors to make it stand out
- Keep a chart or calendar of when you take your medicine. You can use colored pens to keep track of medicines
- Use a pillbox, cellphone or computer to keep track of pills
- Ask for help from family and friends.
- Use a calendar to remember to order refills for your medication.
- You can place your order for refill 3 to 4 days before your medicine run out.

### What to do if a dose is missed

If you miss a dose, do the following

- Take the missed dose as soon as possible on the same day
- If the time you remember to take the missed dose is close (within 6 hours) to when you have to take the next scheduled dose for a particular medication; then take the scheduled dose and skip the make-up dose

- Do not take a double dose of any missed medication on the same day
- Do not take a double dose of your medication the next day to make up for the missed dose

### **Importance of adherence**

It is very important that you take your medication every day at the same scheduled time. This will help you get the most benefit from the medications and will also greatly reduced the need for you to be frequently admitted into the hospital. Taking your medication every day will improve your quality of life by allowing you to participate more in your routine daily activities.

### **Diet and weight monitoring**

- Avoid foods and drinks high in salt content
- Maintain a diet low in sodium: ideally  $\leq 3$  g/day
- Avoid excessive intake of fluid daily; ideally  $\leq 2$ L /day ( 8 cups/day)
- Daily standing weight measurement in the morning

### **Signs to report:**

- Increased body weight: increase of more than 2 - 3 pounds in a day
- Shortness of breath
- Increased difficulty doing routine daily activities
- Requiring more pillows during sleep
- Increased difficulty to lay flat
- Increased swelling in the feet, ankles, abdomen or legs.

### **Possible over-the counter (OTC) medications to avoid:**

- Non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs(NSAID): Advil or Motrin (also known as Ibuprofen) or Aleve (also known as naproxen)
- Decongestants for coughs and cold such as pseudoephedrine
- Taking Metamucil with large amount of water

### **Food/Drug interactions**

- Tell your doctors and dentist about all the medications you are taking, including over the counter medicine, herbal and dietary supplements.

**Next appointment date:** Ask your Nurse during discharge