



# Congratulations!

**You have now completed the patient support program for heart failure, and so this is our last e-mail.**

**We want to open by saying “congratulations”, because you have achieved a huge amount over the course of this program. For example, you have:**

- Learned more about heart failure and its symptoms.
- Made lifestyle changes and learned more about how you can improve your health.
- Taken on and met the challenge of managing your heart failure.

These are great achievements; you should be very proud. While your usual medical care will, of course, continue, having completed the program means that you are now in a great position to play an active role in your own healthcare and heart failure management.



## What you have learned

As you know, heart failure is a long-term condition. That means that you will always have to manage it — but managing your condition well means that you can enjoy your best possible quality of life.

You may find that your heart failure makes you feel less well some times more than others. This is why you have learned about conserving energy for later use, and about the importance of reporting changes in symptoms to your healthcare team so they can be dealt with promptly.

Here are some of the most important things to know about your condition:

- To manage your condition, you must **follow your treatment and self-care regime** as directed by your healthcare team.

- **Taking care of yourself and monitoring your symptoms is a crucial part of your treatment plan.** You may now be regularly using a diary to record your progress, so why not treat yourself to an attractive new diary or notebook, and use it to carry on recording your health progress?



- **Since you will be recording your progress, make sure to reward yourself regularly.**

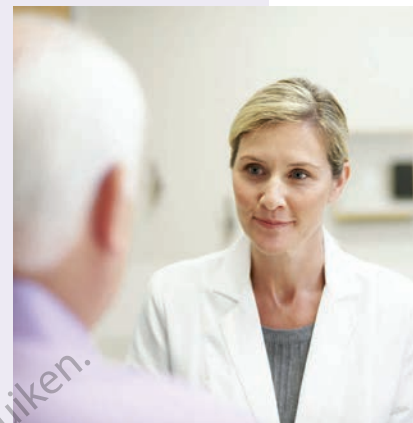
Be proactive in finding reasons to reward yourself (in a heart-friendly way, of course!). Events like reaching a weight loss or exercise goal; adopting a healthy diet; completing another week of recording your progress — all of these (and others) are elements of good self-care management, and excellent reasons to reward yourself.

- **The best way to stick to your treatment plan is to get into a routine.** If you do things every day at the same time and in the same way, it is much harder to forget them. Some people find that linking their routine to events can help them to remember – for example, if you always take a medicine while watching the news, or after eating your lunch, that can help to establish your routine.

- **It's a good idea to set up at least two reminders for every important event you have to remember, such as taking medicine.** If you have two reminders, you always have a back-up if one reminder fails. Using the alarm function on your mobile phone, putting sticky notes around the house or using a calendar kept in a prominent place can all be useful ways of reminding yourself.

- **You must tell your doctor or another member of your healthcare team if you experience any new symptoms, or any change in your existing symptoms.**

- **Ask your doctor what symptoms it is particularly important for you to report immediately** — your doctor may, for example, ask you to report immediately if you experience any drastic weight variation.



- **Make sure you have a healthy diet, are physically active and get sufficient rest.** If you have problems with, or questions about, any of these then speak to your doctor.

- **If you have problems with your mood (for example if you feel down or anxious) or with your sleep, do try relaxation exercises and mindfulness,** but talk to your healthcare team as well.

- **Make sure you establish good communication with your healthcare team and if you have any questions at all, just ask them** — that is what they are there for!



Perhaps the most important lesson to take from this program is that heart failure, while it is a long-term condition that may be worse at some times than others, is manageable. As long as you continue the good work that you have already established, and continue to work in partnership with your healthcare professionals, the future looks much brighter. Congratulations!



**By continuing to work in partnership with your healthcare team, by monitoring your own health and symptoms and following your treatment regime, you are giving yourself a much better chance of a brighter, more fulfilling quality of life.**

If you happen to have an urgent medical concern, please call your doctor, go to your local emergency room, or call your local Emergency Contact number. Remember, your doctor is your primary source for information on your condition and treatment. Be sure to speak with them if you have any questions or concerns.