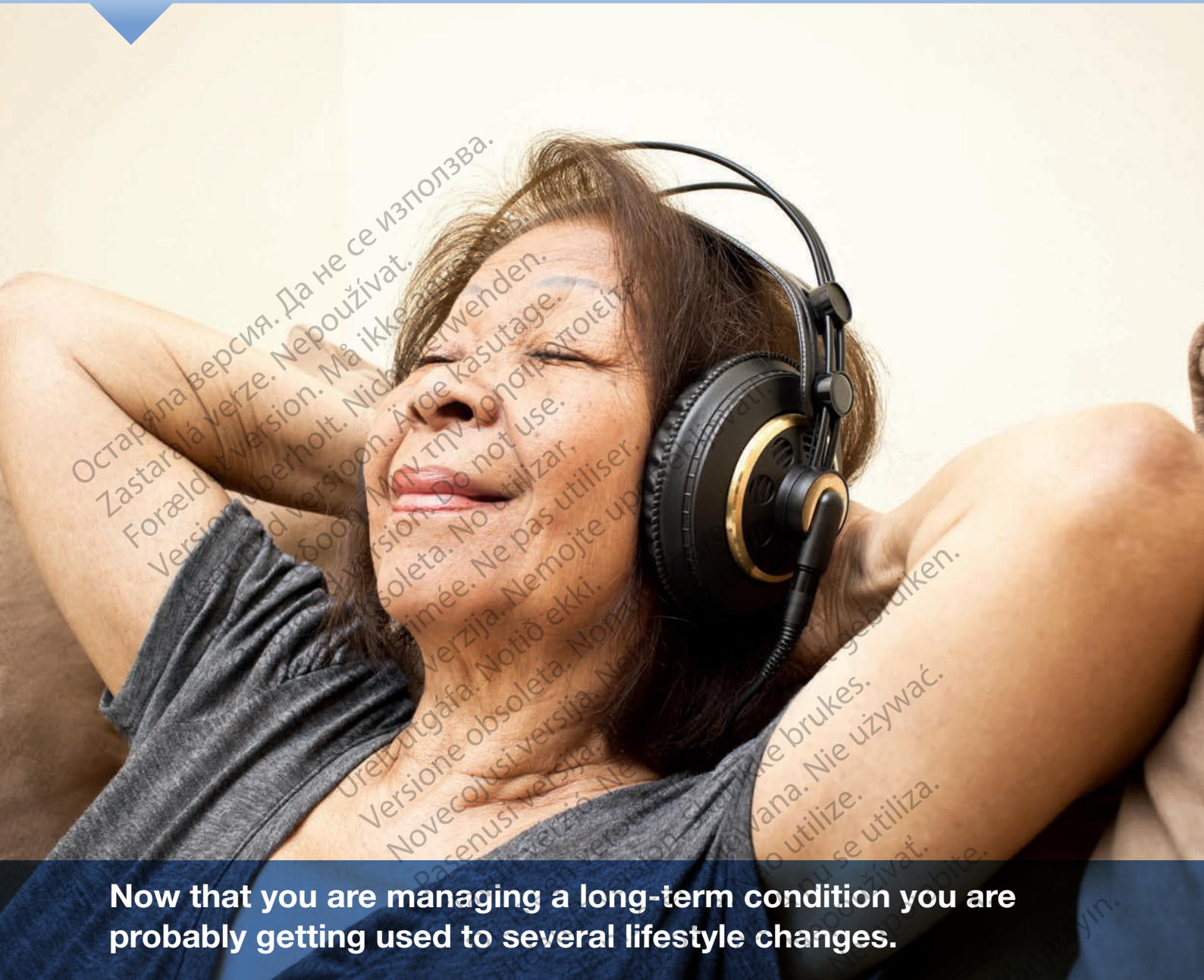




Reward yourself!



Now that you are managing a long-term condition you are probably getting used to several lifestyle changes.

You may have changed the way you eat, drink and exercise. You might work in a different job, or having stopped working altogether, and you will certainly have a treatment and medicine regime to follow.

You have come a long way, and achieved a great deal. Have you rewarded yourself yet?



Why do rewards matter?

There is some evidence that incentives (rewards) can help people to take their medicines properly¹. However, rewarding yourself for managing your own condition has benefits that go beyond that.

Rewards can:

- **Boost your motivation**, making it easier for you to stick with your treatment and monitoring plan
- **Help you to rest and relax while doing the things you enjoy** which is good for your motivation and for your general health
- **Help you to look at heart failure management in terms of possibilities rather than problems:** while it may be tough to get started with heart failure management, rewards will make the long-term journey much more pleasant

For all of these reasons, it can be very helpful if you actively look for reasons to give yourself a pat on the back. It is very important to be honest and only reward genuine achievement, so make sure that you are clear about what you are rewarding yourself for. But with that done, go ahead and work a system of rewards into your heart failure management. Perhaps you want to reward yourself for achieving particular goals? Or for sticking to your treatment plans for a given amount of time? Or both? It's up to you!

Read on for tips on how you can do this.

Your health care professional may have set goals for you in your weekly diary or you may have already set your own **SMART** (**S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**chievable, **R**elevant, **T**ime-bound) goals. Do refer back to them and assess whether it's time for a reward.

Filling out your weekly diary is already an achievement, go ahead and reward yourself for it!

Lots of small, regular rewards are probably more motivating than single, large rewards given for achieving major goals (although you can, of course, do both).

So how are you going to reward yourself? Here are some ideas:



- Go to the cinema to see a funny or uplifting film
- Put a coin in a jar every time you reach a goal and when you have 50 coins, buy yourself a treat
- Watch your favourite TV show — or watch the whole series at once!
- Spend time somewhere new and interesting
- Have a 'pamper' treatment like a facial, new haircut or mani/pedicure
- Read a book or magazine
- Listen to music, or find some new music to enhance your life (the internet is great for this)
- Play games; word search or puzzle books, computer/video games or board games
- Get creative; knit, paint, draw, write, sew
- Spend time with someone you love



Can you think of any others? What rewards would enhance *your* life?



While it is very important to reward yourself, do make sure that your rewards are heart healthy. If you have any questions about rewarding yourself, have a chat with a member of your healthcare team.

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.

References

1. De Fulio A, Silverman K. The use of incentives to reinforce medication adherence. *Prev Med* 2012 Nov; 55 Suppl: S86-94.