

DIGOXIN (LANOXIN®, LANOXICAPS®)**Why is this medicine prescribed?**

Digoxin helps an injured or weakened heart to pump blood more efficiently. It strengthens the force of the heart muscle's contractions, helps restore a normal steady heart rhythm, improves blood circulation, and helps remove excess water from the tissues. It relieves symptoms such as swelling of the lower legs and ankles and shortness of breath. It may also improve your ability to exercise.

When should it be used?

Digoxin is usually taken once a day. This medicine must be taken on a regular schedule. Do not stop taking Digoxin without consulting your doctor. You may take Digoxin with or without food.

What should I do if I forget to take a dose?

If you miss a dose or forget to use your medicine, use it as soon as you can. If you are more than 12 hours late, wait until it is time for your next regular dose and skip the missed dose. You should not use two doses at the same time. If you miss your doses for two days or longer, call your doctor.

Side effects that can be caused by this medication:

- Loss of appetite, nausea, and vomiting
- Changes in vision such as flashes or flickering of light, blurring, color changes, and seeing halos or borders on objects
- Drowsiness, headache, or confusion
- Changes in your heartbeat or pulse

Call your doctor if you have any of these side effects.

BETA-BLOCKERS

When should it be used?

Beta-blockers are usually taken once or twice a day. Follow the instructions on your prescription label. Beta-blockers may be taken with or without food.

Why is this medication prescribed?

Beta-blockers can help the heart pump better. They may also improve symptoms and help patients to live longer.

Some common examples include:

- Atenolol (Tenormin®)
- Metoprolol (Lopressor®, Toprol®)
- Carvedilol (Coreg®)
- Bisoprolol (Zebeta®)

What should I do if I forget to take a dose?

If you miss a dose or forget to take your medicine, take it as soon as you remember. If your next regular dose is less than four hours away (eight hours for extended release tablets), wait until then to take your medicine and skip the missed dose. Do not take a double dose.

Side effects that can be caused by these medications:

- Dizziness or drowsiness
- Depressed mood or difficulty sleeping
- Decreased sexual ability
- Cold hands and feet
- Slow or irregular heartbeat
- Difficulty breathing or wheezing

Call your doctor if you have any of these side effects.

SPIRONOLACTONE (ALDACTONE®)**Why is this medicine prescribed?**

Spironolactone is a “water pill” that can help relieve symptoms of congestive heart failure.

When should it be used?

Spironolactone is usually taken once daily. Follow the instructions on your prescription label. It may cause you to go to the bathroom more often. It is best to take it in the morning to avoid having to go too often during the night.

What should I do if I forget to take a dose?

Take the missed dose if you remember on the same day and then continue your regular dosing schedule. If you do not remember until it is time to take the next dose, take only one dose. Do not take a double dose.

What side effects can this medicine cause?

- Dizziness, drowsiness or headache. Stand up slowly from a sitting or lying position
- Upset stomach, nausea or loss of appetite
- Women may experience breast tenderness, hair growth or irregular menstrual periods. Men may experience breast swelling

Call your doctor if you have any of these side effects.

HEART HEALTHY MEDICATION RESPONSIBILITIES

- I will take my medication as my doctor has prescribed. These medicines will help my heart and improve symptoms. Taking too much or too little medication can be bad for my heart.
- I will not stop taking these medications even if I feel better. The medicine is what is making me feel better.
- I will keep track of my medication on my medication record after each dose.
- I will keep a list of my medications with me at all times and carry my medications when I travel.
- I will not run out of my medications. I will refill them when I have two weeks supply left.
- I will call my doctor if I am unable to buy my medications.
- I will call my doctor if these medications are making me feel bad or sick.
- I will check with my pharmacist or doctor before I take any non prescription medications such as vitamins, herbal remedies, or cold preparations.

STAYING WELL WITH CONGESTIVE HEART FAILURE

Rest:

- Avoid getting worn out
- Plan times during the day when you can rest or relax
- Plan time to lie down for at least 30 minutes each afternoon
- Get plenty of sleep each night

Activity:

- Talk with your doctor about how much activity is right for you
- Know your limits and don't push yourself
- Stop and rest if you feel tired or short of breath
- Plan activities like a short walk, visiting a friend, or doing a little shopping on days that you feel well
- Write your activities on your activity record each day

During your hospital stay, your heart function may be measured. Your doctor will discuss what this means to you.

MY RESPONSIBILITIES FOR STAYING WELL

- I will weigh myself every day before breakfast, after emptying my bladder, wearing the same clothes and using the same scale. I will keep record of my weight.
- If I have gained more than two pounds overnight or three pounds in a week I will call my doctor and report the weight gain.
- I will stay on a low salt diet. I will know foods low in salt/sodium and will use them in my diet. I will avoid foods high in salt/sodium.
- I will take all medications as prescribed. I will know the name of each pill. I will know what it does to my body. I will know the side effects of each medicine.
- I will call and report any side effects or problems with my medications to my doctor.
- I will know the symptoms of heart failure. If I have increased shortness of breath, increased tiredness or fatigue, swelling or need to go to the bathroom more frequently at night, I will call my doctor as soon as possible.
- I will conserve my energy. I will plan what I need to do each day. I will lie down 15 to 20 minutes every afternoon. I will ask others to help me if needed.
- I will record my daily activities on my activity record.

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DAILY REMINDER FOR HEALTHY LIVING WITH CONGESTIVE HEART FAILURE

(Cut out and post at home)

- Follow low sodium diet (as ordered).
- Weigh yourself daily before breakfast, after emptying your bladder. Wear the same clothes and use the same scale. Keep record of weight.
- Stop and rest when you feel tired, clammy, dizzy, or have chest discomfort.

CALL YOUR DOCTOR IF YOU HAVE:

- Weight gain of two pounds overnight or three pounds in one week
- Shortness of breath during routine activity or when lying down
- Shortness of breath that wakes you up
- Tightening of pants or skirt/abdominal fullness
- Swelling of feet and ankles
- Chest pain or tightness
- Rapid heart beat
- Side effects of medication
- Decreased urination during the day and more at night
- A dry hacking cough
- If you feel more tired than you should

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ACTIVITIES RECORD

	Daily activities	Daily exercise/ How long?	Problems	Comments
Example	Laundry, housework, shopping	Walked 30 minutes	Short of breath, more tired	Had to stop and rest after 15 minutes
Monday				
Tuesday				
Wednesday				
Thursday				
Friday				
Saturday				
Sunday				

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WEIGHT AND HEALTHY HABITS

Weight:

- My beginning home weight is _____ pounds.
- Weigh yourself everyday before breakfast and after emptying your bladder. Wear the same clothes and use the same scale.
- Write your weight on the weight record each day.

If you gain two pounds overnight or three pounds in one week, call your doctor.

Healthy habits:

- Lose weight if you are overweight.
- Don't smoke or use tobacco.
- Limit amount of alcohol you drink.
- Keep regular appointments with your doctor.
- Avoid people who have colds.
- Get flu and pneumonia shots.
- Keep your records up to date.
- Take your records with you when you go to the doctor or the hospital.

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WEIGHT RECORD

Record your weight everyday

A sudden gain in weight may mean that your body is retaining fluid or that your condition is worsening. As a result, recording your weight everyday is very important. Use the chart below to record your weight. Weigh yourself before breakfast and after emptying your bladder. Wear the same clothes and use the same scale.

	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
EXAMPLE: WEEK ____ WEIGHT	150	151	150	150	150	152	151
WEEK ____ WEIGHT							
WEEK ____ WEIGHT							
WEEK ____ WEIGHT							
WEEK ____ WEIGHT							
WEEK ____ WEIGHT							
WEEK ____ WEIGHT							
WEEK ____ WEIGHT							
WEEK ____ WEIGHT							

Call your doctor right away if you gain two pounds overnight or three pounds in one week.

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WEIGHT RECORD

	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
EXAMPLE: WEEK ____ WEIGHT	150	151	150	150	150	152	151
WEEK ____ WEIGHT							
WEEK ____ WEIGHT							
WEEK ____ WEIGHT							
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WEEK ____ WEIGHT							
WEEK ____ WEIGHT							

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WEEKLY MEDICATION RECORD

Name of medication and dose	Size, shape, and color of pill	When to take	Place an "X" after each medication when taken						
			Sun.	Mon.	Tues.	Wed.	Thurs.	Fri.	Sat.
Week 1									
Week 2									
Week 3									
Week 4									
Week 5									
Week 6									
Week 7									
Week 8									

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WEEKLY MEDICATION RECORD

Name of medication and dose	Size, shape, and color of pill	When to take	Place an "X" after each medication when taken						
			Sun.	Mon.	Tues.	Wed.	Thurs.	Fri.	Sat.
Week 9									
Week 10									
Week 11									
Week 12									
Week 13									
Week 14									
Week 15									
Week 16									

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IMPORTANT NAMES AND PHONE NUMBERS

Family doctor name: _____

Phone number: _____

Cardiologist name: _____

Phone number: _____

Other name: _____

Phone number: _____

Oxygen supplier name: _____

Phone number: _____

Pharmacy name: _____

Phone number: _____

Home health care agency name: _____

Phone number: _____

Emergency contact name: _____

Phone number: _____

Health information center: _____

Phone number: _____

Other numbers: _____

Other numbers: _____

Other numbers: _____

Other important information: _____

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VIDEO INFORMATION

FREE VIDEO

For patients and families

LIVING WITH HEART FAILURE

A home video guide for improving self-care

Call the CAMC Health Information Center at **1-888-healthy** for your FREE copy to review at home.

After viewing, please return your video in the postage paid envelope provided.

Sponsored by:

CAMC Institute-Health Information Center

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