

## February is American Heart Month

### The Failing Heart

Heart failure can have many symptoms, and some symptoms are more serious than others. It is important that you are able to recognize these symptoms and know when to call your doctor or nurse, or when to call 911 for urgent help. Noticing these early changes and taking the appropriate steps to manage them may help prevent a more urgent problem from developing or even prevent a hospital stay.

Symptoms to report are –

- A weight gain **or** loss of more than 3 pounds in a 1–2 day period, or 4–5 pounds in a 3–5 day period
- Swelling in the legs, feet, hands, or abdomen (Rings, shoes or pants may feel tight with mild swelling.)
- Cough or chest congestion
- Loss of appetite, nausea and vomiting
- Increasing fatigue or a sudden decrease in ability to do normal activities
- A feeling of fullness or bloating in the stomach
- Confusion
- Dizziness, lightheadedness
- Decreased urination or dark urine
- Chest pain or discomfort during activity that is relieved with rest
- A newly irregular heartbeat or a faster heart rate than normal
- Low blood pressure (especially after taking medications)
- Shortness of breath (that is new, becomes worse or occurs more often, or if it occurs at rest or while waking from sleep).

### ***Shovel Snow Safely***

U.S. hospitals treat about 11,500 injuries a year related to shoveling snow. Snow shoveling puts heavy demands on the cardiovascular system and can raise heart rates to dangerous levels after only two minutes. Freezing temperatures that constrict blood vessels put more stress on the heart. More than half of injuries resulted from muscle strains and sprains, 20% from slips and falls, and nearly 7% from cardiac problems, such as heart attack.

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*I will be out of the office between February 27th-March 3<sup>rd</sup>. If you need assistance please call the office for help from Sandy Freeman.*

*Happy Valentine's Day!*

*Chris Lewis*