

# Care Transitions & Reduction in Hospitalization

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American Association of Heart Failure Nurses



## Anxiety and Heart Failure

Having heart failure is a very stressful issue to deal with. When this stress begins to mount, it can lead to uncontrollable anxiety. This anxiety causes the release of certain hormones in your body that increase the stress on your heart and can make your heart failure worse. Anxiety can lead to depression as well, so dealing with one problem often leads to dealing with the other as well. People in your life may notice signs that you are feeling anxious before you are aware of it yourself. Common symptoms include:

- Irritability
- Feeling restless or on edge
- Tensing of muscles for no useful reason
- Difficulty falling asleep
- Fear about future problems
- Difficulty concentrating
- Lack of energy
- Avoiding activities because of overwhelming fear

### Unhealthy ways to deal with anxiety

When people experience these mood changes, they will often try to deal with it by themselves. Many of these ways of dealing with them will make your heart failure worse as well as the anxiety. These include:

- Smoking cigarettes or marijuana
- Drinking alcohol
- Using illegal drugs
- Eating unhealthy foods
- Isolating away from family and loved ones

### Healthier ways to deal with anxiety

- Light exercise, especially outside
- Other outdoor activities like fishing or going to an outdoor event
- Religious or spiritual practices
- Breathing exercises and meditation- go to this [Youtube Video on breathing exercises](#)
- Spending time with family and friends
- Talking with your healthcare professional
- Finding hobbies you enjoy
- Attending a support group, ask your healthcare provider for more information

**If your anxiety does not improve, you may need to be started on medicine to help with your mood.**

**Talk with your doctor or nurse about these issues and they can also refer you for counseling.**

## Dealing with heart failure

Heart failure is a lifelong journey and dealing with it includes dealing with all parts of your life, including your mental and emotional health. Your healthcare team is here to help you deal with these problems in a healthy way, just ask them for more information and they will be happy to help you.