

*If you have questions, ask your physician or nurse.*

## Intravenous Furosemide (Lasix®) Therapy

Furosemide is a medication to treat symptoms of heart failure. If you have heart failure, your heart is not able to pump blood as well as it should. This causes fluid to back up into your lungs and some parts of your body.

Furosemide is a diuretic medication (water pill) that helps get rid of extra sodium (salt) and water from your body. It also helps your kidneys make more urine. When your body gets rid of extra fluid, your heart can pump better.

### Getting furosemide in the clinic

During your visit to the clinic, your physician may decide that furosemide therapy will help you. You can get furosemide as a pill by mouth or an injection into a vein (IV). It gets rid of fluid faster when you get it as an injection.

The nurse will prepare the medication in a syringe. They will slowly inject it into your vein through a small needle.

You will likely feel like you have to urinate within minutes after you get the medication. You may need to urinate several times over the next few hours as your body gets rid of fluid.

After you get furosemide, we will ask you to sit in the clinic waiting area until you can urinate and feel comfortable safely getting home.

### Side effects of furosemide

This medication gets rid of extra fluid from your body, so you may have these symptoms:

- Dizziness
- Light-headedness
- Weakness
- Muscle cramps or leg pain
- Dry mouth
- Increased thirst
- Ringing in your ears or hearing loss (This is rare and chances increase with higher doses.)

## What to do at home

### ***Keep a record***

It is important to keep a written log at home to help you notice changes in your body or how you feel.

- Record your blood pressure every day.
- Record your weight. Weigh yourself each day:
  - When you wake up
  - After using the bathroom for the first time of the day
  - Before eating or drinking
- Record any symptoms you have.

### ***Limit sodium and fluids***

- Limit the amount of sodium in your diet to 2,000 milligrams or less per day.
- Limit the amount of fluid in your diet to about 64 ounces (about 2 liters) per day. This includes foods that are not solid such as soup, popsicles, Jell-O®, yogurt and ice cream.

### ***Know the symptoms of heart failure***

Use the *Heart Failure Zone* guide to help you manage your symptoms. Please call the clinic at 312.695.4965 if you notice any of these symptoms:

- Gaining 2 pounds or more in 1 day or 5 pounds or more in 1 week
- Swelling of your feet, legs or belly
- Increasing shortness of breath
- New cough
- Dizziness when you stand or sit
- Fast or irregular heart rate
- Chest pain that does not go away

### ***Call 911 or go to the nearest emergency department right away if you have:***

- Severe and constant shortness of breath
- Fainting or “passing out”
- Chest pain that does not go away or chest discomfort that is not relieved by nitroglycerin and lasts more than 15 minutes
- Confusion or trouble thinking
- Signs of an allergic reaction to furosemide such as:
  - Swelling of your tongue or face
  - New rash
  - Feeling as if your throat is closing

## For more information

Please contact us with any questions, for consultations or to request more information.

Northwestern Medicine Bluhm Cardiovascular Institute

Galter Pavilion

675 North Saint Clair Street, Suite 19-100

Chicago, Illinois 60611

312.695.4965

TTY: 711

## *Internet resources*

Learn more about heart health at these web sites:

- Northwestern Medicine Bluhm Cardiovascular Institute  
**heart.nm.org**
- American Heart Association (AHA)  
**heart.org**
- American College of Cardiology  
**cardiosmart.org**

