IV Lasix (Furosemide) for Heart Failure Relapse

What is heart failure?
If you have heart failure, your heart muscles have become weakened and do not pump blood as well as they should. It does not mean that your heart has stopped working.
The blood flow that is normally pumped forward backs up into your lungs and other parts of the body. The heart is not able to meet the demands of the body and less blood, oxygen, and nutrients get to the tissues.
You need to take medicines and limit salt in your diet to control your signs. This treatment helps your heart pump better when you have heart failure.

Treatment for relapse
When you have signs that your heart failure has gotten worse, it is called a relapse or an exacerbation. Gaining 2 or 3 pounds of weight in a day or 5 pounds over a week can be a sign of relapse. You may also have:

- Swelling in the hands, feet, or face known as edema
- Abdominal bloating or discomfort that may affect your appetite or make you nauseated
- Trouble breathing, shortness of breath or chest pain
- Need to use several pillows to sleep at night because you are not able to lay flat
- Fatigue or tire easily

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One treatment is medicine called Lasix, also called furosemide. This medicine is a **diuretic** that removes excess sodium or salt and water from your body. Your heart can work better when the extra fluid is removed from your body. Intravenous (IV) Lasix is given in your vein through a tube called an IV. Recovery will vary from person to person.

Not everyone will require IV Lasix for treatment. Some patients may need to increase their diuretic pills to control worsening signs of heart failure. If this has failed, IV treatment may be helpful.

**How is IV Lasix given?**

An IV line is started and left in place during your visit to the outpatient clinic. Your blood pressure will be checked. You may have blood work drawn at the time we start your IV. The medicine is put in a syringe by the nurse, and given over a few minutes through your IV. Your blood pressure will be checked after the medicine is given, and again before you leave the clinic.

**What are the side effects of IV Lasix?**

You may feel:

- Dizzy
- Weak
- Lightheaded or faint

**Other side effects may include:**

- Muscle cramps or pain in your legs
- Dry mouth or increased thirst
- Hearing loss, or ringing in the ears
- Diarrhea or stomach pain

Muscle cramps or pain may be caused by loss of water in the body that carries away salt and minerals. Your doctor may talk with you about eating foods high in potassium and/or magnesium or taking supplements to improve your side effects. Potassium and magnesium are lost from the body because of increased urination when taking diuretics. They are needed in the body for the heart to maintain a good rhythm. Take them with or right after a meal.
These supplements are found by these names:

- Magnesium oxide (Mag Ox, Uro Mag)
- Potassium chloride (Klor-con, K Tab, K Dur)

**Special food warning:** When taking Lasix, **do not eat foods containing licorice.** Licorice removes potassium from the body. Check food labels for this ingredient.

**How soon can I expect to see results from the IV Lasix?**

You will likely feel the need to urinate within 20 to 30 minutes after the Lasix. The effects of your IV dose will last about 4 to 6 hours.

**What can I do to help prevent relapses?**

- Closely check your diet for salt or sodium intake. Please **limit your sodium to 2000mg or less per day.** Read food labels! Ask to meet with a dietitian if you are not sure how to cut back on salt in your diet.
- Limit your fluid intake to 64 ounces or 2 Liters each day. This includes drinks and non-solid foods like popsicles, gelatin, and ice cream.
- If you smoke or use tobacco, stop.
- Take all your medicines, as directed.
- Weigh yourself each day before your morning meal. Keep a record. If your weight increases by 2 to 3 pounds overnight or 5 pounds in 1 week, please call your doctor.
- Walk or ride a stationary bicycle each day as directed by your doctor or care team.
- Be sure to see your doctor for routine follow up visits.

Heart failure will not go away but you can control it. Work with your doctor and your care team to keep your heart working as well as it can.

If you have any questions, please talk to your doctor, nurse practitioner, or nurse, or contact Ohio State’s Heart Failure Clinic at 614-293-6081.

**Talk to your doctor or others on your health care team if you have any questions. You may request more written information from the Library for Health Information at (614) 293-3707 or email:**

[health-info@osu.edu](mailto:health-info@osu.edu).