Heart Failure—Low Sodium and Salt Diet

Why is a low sodium and salt diet important?
It’s important to reduce your sodium and salt when you have heart failure.
• Heart failure causes the body to hold onto extra sodium.
• The extra sodium causes extra fluid to build up in your body.
• You may notice swelling in your:
  • Feet and ankles
  • Abdomen
  • Face and hands
• Extra fluid makes your heart work harder.
• You may notice shortness of breath and weight gain.

What is a low sodium diet?
• A low sodium diet includes no more than 2,000-3,000 milligrams of sodium per day
• This is the same as two to three grams a day
• One teaspoon of salt is approximately 2,300 milligrams of sodium

How can I cut back on salt and sodium?
• Stop adding salt to your food.
• Buy your favorite foods in a low sodium version.
• Pick foods naturally low in sodium.
• Learn to read food labels.
• Take the salt shaker off the table.

• Do not add salt when cooking.
• Experiment with low- or no-salt herbs, spices and seasoning mixes.
• Dried and fresh herbs such as garlic, garlic or onion powder (not salt) add flavor, not sodium.
• Sprinkle fresh lemon juice over vegetables or salads.
• Season or marinate meat, poultry and fish ahead of time with onion, garlic and your favorite herbs before cooking to bring out the flavors.
• Avoid spices and seasoning mixes with the word salt or sodium listed in the ingredients.
• Use low-sodium substitutes for the foods you like; Example: use fresh pork loin instead of country ham
• Remove some sodium from canned foods by rinsing them with water.
• Select low-sodium cheeses or yogurt when making sauces.
• Choose fresh fruit and vegetables whenever possible.
• Frozen vegetables and fruits are lower in sodium than canned.
• Dried beans, peas and lentils are low sodium and contain fiber.
• Do not add items such as a ham hock or salt pork when cooking.