



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.

The content of this CareTip is for informational purposes only and is not intended to be a substitute for professional medical advice, diagnosis or treatment. Always seek the advice of your physician with any questions you may have regarding a medical condition.

