

<i>Client:</i>	<i>Date:</i>
<i>Clinician:</i>	

When you have heart failure, excess fluid is more likely to build up in your body. This makes the heart work harder to pump blood. Fluid buildup also causes symptoms such as shortness of breath and swelling. Controlling the amount of salt (sodium) you eat may help prevent fluid from building up. Your doctor may also tell you to reduce the amount of fluid you drink.

Reading Food Labels

Read food labels to keep track of how much sodium you eat. Keep in mind that canned, frozen, and processed foods can be high in salt. Check the amount of sodium in each serving. Also, watch out for high-sodium ingredients like MSG (monosodium glutamate), baking soda, and sodium phosphate.

Eating Less Salt

- Take the saltshaker off the table. Replace it with salt-free herb mixes and spices.
- Eat fresh or plain frozen vegetables. These have much less salt than canned vegetables.
- Choose low-sodium snacks like sodium-free pretzels, crackers, or air-popped popcorn.
- Don't add salt to your food when you're cooking. Instead, season your foods with pepper, lemon, garlic, or onion.
- When you eat out, ask that your food be cooked without added salt.

If You Are Told to Limit Fluid

You may need to limit fluid intake to help prevent swelling. This includes anything that is liquid at room temperature, such as ice cream and soup. If you are instructed to limit fluid, try these tips:

- Measure drinks in a measuring cup before you drink them.
- Chill drinks to make them more refreshing.
- Suck on frozen lemon wedges to quench thirst.
- Only drink when you're thirsty.
- Chew sugarless gum or suck on hard candy to keep your mouth moist.

When to Call Your Nurse or Doctor

Call your nurse or doctor right away if you have any signs of worsening heart failure, including sudden weight gain, increased swelling of your legs or ankles, or more trouble breathing when you're resting or at night.

Publication Source: Fletcher GF, Medical Clinics of North America, 88(5), Lifestyle and dietary modification for prevention of heart failure, Nov 15, 1998, pp 1295-320, xii

Online Source: National Guideline Clearinghouse
[<http://www.americanheart.org/presenter.jhtml?identifier=1444>]

Online Source: Pulmonary Hypertension Association
http://www.phassociation.org/support/PH_tips.asp

IMPORTANT NOTICE

Contact the on-call nurse if you are experiencing any change in your current health condition.
For ALL emergencies requiring IMMEDIATE medical attention, call 911.
Teachingsheet-heartfailediet/09-09