

Limiting Sodium (Salt) When You Have Heart Failure

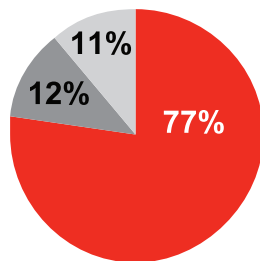
Sodium is a mineral found in food, table salt, and sea salt. Your body needs some sodium, but too much sodium causes your body to hold on to (or retain) fluid. This fluid build-up makes your heart work harder. The fluid build-up can cause swelling in your feet, legs, or belly. Fluid can also build up in your lungs, making it hard for you to breathe.

If your weight increases more than 4 lbs (2 kg) over 2 days in a row or 5 lbs (2.5 kg) in 1 week, you are retaining fluid. If this happens, you should call your healthcare provider right away.

You should restrict the amount of sodium you eat to between 2000 mg and 3000 mg per day.

In the average Canadian diet, where does sodium come from?

- In ready-made processed foods and restaurant meals (77%)
- Naturally occurring in food (12%)
- Added to food in cooking and at the table (11%)



How to avoid salt (sodium)?

- Eat fresh foods most of the time and prepare home-cooked, low sodium meals.
- Frozen foods are acceptable if they do not have added salt or sodium additives (which are used as preservatives).
- Remove the salt shaker from the table. Don't add salt, flavoured salts or seasonings high in salt to your foods. **One teaspoon of salt contains 2300 mg of sodium!**

- Season your food with herbs, spices, lemon juice, dry mustard, and garlic. Try one of the many seasoning blends which contain no salt such as Mrs. Dash.

- Stay away from eating:

- Processed foods
- Deli meats
- Pickled foods
- Salted snack foods such as potato chips, pretzels, dips, and salted nuts



- Limit the amount of canned foods you eat. Choose products labeled '**low sodium**'. Foods labeled 'lower', 'less' or 'reduced in salt or sodium' may still be high in sodium (including soups and meats).

- Eat out less often.

- Ask restaurants to provide information on low sodium choices.
- Restaurant meals and fast foods are always higher in salt than home cooked low sodium meals.

Can I use salt substitutes?

Some salt substitutes use potassium instead of sodium. Check with your doctor or dietitian before using a salt substitute because some people need to limit how much potassium they have each day.

Keep your sodium intake to less than 2000 mg each day.

As you gradually reduce the amount of salt you are eating, your taste buds will adjust!

How do I know how much sodium is in food?

Here are some helpful tips when reading the nutrition label:

- Look at the serving size – the amount of sodium listed is **per serving** (not the whole package).
- Keep track of the total amount of sodium you eat. Remember: Your maximum recommended daily amount of sodium is **no more than 2000 mg per day from all sources**.
- Keep the sodium content of each meal below 650 mg – this helps spread out your sodium intake over the day preventing excessive thirst and/or fluid retention.
- By law, foods labelled 'low sodium' must contain 140 mg or less per serving.

Other ingredients high in sodium include:

baking soda, brine, monosodium glutamate (MSG), soy sauce, fish sauce, garlic salt, celery salt, or any ingredient with 'sodium' as part of its name.

Nutrition Facts Valeur nutritive

Per 1 cup (250 mL)
pour 1 tasse (250 mL)

Calories 110	% Daily Value*
	% valeur quotidienne*
Fat / Lipides 0 g	0 %
Saturated / saturés 0 g	0 %
+ Trans / trans 0 g	
Carbohydrate / Glucides 26 g	
Fibre / Fibres 0 g	0 %
Sugars / Sucres 22 g	22 %
Protein / Protéines 2 g	
Cholesterol / Cholestérol 0 mg	
Sodium 0 mg	0 %
Potassium 450 mg	10 %
Calcium 30 mg	2 %
Iron / Fer 0 mg	0 %

*5% or less is **a little**, 15% or more is **a lot**

*5% ou moins c'est **peu**, 15% ou plus c'est **beaucoup**

Look what happens to the sodium content of foods when they are processed

Unprocessed	Processed
Cucumber 7 slices = 2 mg	Dill pickle 1 medium = 569 mg
Chicken Breast 3 oz = 74 mg	Chicken Pie 1 serving frozen = 889 mg
Tomato 1 small = 14 mg	Tomato Soup 1 cup = 960 mg
Pork Tenderloin 3 oz = 58 mg	Ham 3 oz = 1095 mg

Limiting Fluid When You Have Heart Failure

What is a fluid?

Any food or drink that is liquid at room temperature. This includes water, ice, milk, juices, soft drinks, hot drinks, alcohol, soups, gelatin desserts, ice cream, popsicles, and liquid nutrition supplements (such as Ensure or Boost).

Why do you have to limit fluid?

When you have heart failure, fluid can build up causing swelling in your feet, legs or belly making your heart work harder. Fluid can also build up in your lungs, which may cause you to have trouble breathing.

How much fluid can you have in a day?

You should have **no more than 1.5 to 2 litres of fluid in a day**. You may find you are thirsty to begin with. As you gradually reduce your fluid intake, your body will adjust!

Guide to fluid measures

2 tablespoons	=	30 ml	=	1 ounce
1 glass	=	250 ml	=	8 ounce
1 pint	=	500 ml	=	16 ounce
1 litre or 1 quart	=	1000 ml	=	32 ounce
2 litres	=	2000 ml	=	64 ounce

Total amount of fluid per day
1.5-2 litres = 48-64 ounces = 6-8 glasses

How do you know when you have too much fluid?

To keep track of whether your body is holding on to too much fluid, weigh yourself daily.



Here is how to weigh yourself:

- Weigh yourself at the same time every day. The best time is first thing in the morning.
- Weigh yourself after emptying your bladder (gone pee).
- Wear the same amount of clothing each time.

You are holding on to too much fluid when:

Your weight increases by more than 2 kg or 4 lb in two days.	or	Your weight increases by more than 2.5 kg or 5 lb in a week.
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Contact your healthcare provider right away if you are holding too much fluid.

Tips for reducing your fluid intake

- Use smaller cups and glasses.
- Measure the amount of fluid your mugs and glasses hold. They may measure more than 250 ml or 8 ounces.
- Sip your fluids slowly.
- Write down the amount you drink each day until limiting your fluid becomes a habit.

More tips for reducing your fluid intake

- Sip your fluids throughout the day. Keeping track of fluids is the only way to learn how to make the 1.5 to 2 litres of fluid last you through the day.
- You may find it easier to use a reusable water bottle. Measure how much the bottle holds so you know exactly how much water you are drinking.
- Drain the fluid from canned fruit.
- Be aware of foods with high water content like watermelon, yogurt, and pudding.
- If you can, swallow your pills with soft food like yogurt or porridge.



- Limit the amount of sodium you eat to 2000 mg or less each day. Salt will make you thirsty. For more information, refer to the handout *Limiting salt (sodium) when you have heart failure*.



- Try not to eat sweet foods. They can make you thirsty. If you have diabetes, controlling your blood sugar also helps control your thirst.
- Try not to drink alcohol. Alcohol dehydrates your body and makes you thirsty.

Tips to deal with thirst

- Rinse your mouth with water often, but do not swallow.
- Brush your teeth often.
- Use a mouth wash. However, do not use a mouth wash that contains alcohol. They tend to dry out your mouth.
- Snack on a small piece of cold or frozen fruit such as a frozen grape or cold orange slice. Try cold crisp vegetables too.
- Chew sugar-free gum.
- Suck on a lemon wedge, lemon candy, or sour candy.
- Use lip balm to keep your lips from drying out.
- Don't overheat your home. Consider using a humidifier to increase the moisture in the air.
- Ask your pharmacist about gels or sprays that can add moisture to your mouth.

Managing Potassium in What You Eat

Potassium is a mineral found in many foods, especially fruits and vegetables. A diet with the right amount of potassium is important for overall health.

In some people who have heart failure and/or kidney disease, potassium can build up in the blood. Too much or too little potassium in your blood can cause problems with your heart rhythm.

Certain heart failure medications are more likely to cause a build-up of potassium. Other medications like water pills can lower the amount of potassium in your blood. Your blood potassium level should be checked when you start on these medications and when the dose changes.

If your level is above 5 mmol/L, eat more of the lower potassium foods and less of the higher potassium foods.

If your potassium level is still high, call 8-1-1 to speak to a registered dietitian, or speak to your healthcare provider about potassium in other foods.

What should the blood potassium level be?

Your potassium level should be in the safe range. When it is, there is no need to make changes to your diet.

Blood potassium level

Safe or Normal	>>>	3.5 to 5.0 mmol/L
Caution	>>>	5.0 to 6.0 mmol/L
Danger	>>>	Over 6.0 mmol/L Below 3.5 mmol/L

If your level is less than 3.5 mmol/L, add more foods high in potassium to your diet. Your healthcare provider might suggest you take a potassium supplement.



How do I know how much potassium is in packaged foods?

• Look at the serving size.

The amount of potassium listed is per serving (not the whole package or container)

- If your blood potassium level is high, choose foods with **235 mg potassium or less**.



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Per 1 cup (250 mL) pour 1 tasse (250 mL)	
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+ Trans / trans 0 g	
Carbohydrate / Glucides 26 g	
Fibre / Fibres 0 g	0 %
Sugars / Sucres 22 g	22 %
Protein / Protéines 2 g	
Cholesterol / Cholestérol 0 mg	
Sodium 0 mg	0 %
Potassium 450 mg	10 %
Calcium 30 mg	2 %
Iron / Fer 0 mg	0 %
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Lower potassium foods*		Higher potassium foods	
Fruit (1/2 cup serving)			
Apple and applesauce	Mandarin Orange	Apricot	Papaya
Berries including strawberries	Pear and Asian Pear	Avocado	Peach
Grape	Pineapple	Banana	Plantain
Cherry	Plum	Cantaloupe	Nectarine
Fig	Watermelon	Honeydew	Mango
Lychee and Longan	Rhubarb	Kiwi	All dried fruit
		Orange – Naval, Blood	Dried coconut
Vegetables (1/2 cup serving)			
Bok Choy	Green Peas	Beet and Beet Greens	Sweet Potato
Bean Sprouts	Pepper (all colours, raw)	Brussel Sprout	Squash - Acorn,
Cabbage and Kale	Snap and Snow Peas	Cassava	Butternut, Hubbard,
Carrot	Spaghetti Squash	Kohlrabi	Kabocha, Pumpkin
Cauliflower	Spinach, raw	Mushrooms	Taro
Celery	Tomato – fresh (1 plum,	Parsnip	Tomato (paste, canned,
Corn	½ medium, ½ cup	Potato	sauce, juice)
Cucumber	cherry)	Rutabaga	Zucchini, cooked
Green beans	Turnip	Spinach, cooked	Yam
Lettuce	Zucchini, raw	Swiss Chard	
Other			
Almond and rice milk		Limit dairy or soy milk to 1 cup a day	
Low potassium meal replacements		Meal replacements like Ensure , Boost	
(Ask a dietitian for suggestions)			
Salt-Free Seasonings like Mrs.Dash™		Salt Substitutes like NoSalt, Half Salt	
Water, tea, coffee		Many fruit and vegetable juices	
		Coconut milk and coconut water	

***If your potassium level is higher than 5 mmol/L...**

➤➤➤ Eat up to 5 of the lower potassium fruit and vegetables (in total) a day.

Tip: Double boil root vegetables (like potatoes) to lower the amount of potassium.

- Peel the vegetables then cube or slice..
- Place in a pot large enough to cover with double the amount of water.
- Bring to a boil, then drain off the water.
- Cover with fresh water and finish cooking.



**Don't save any of the water.
It is full of potassium.**