

Reducing salt intake with heart failure

Why limit salt?

Salt (also called **sodium**) makes your body hold onto fluid. This means your heart must work harder to pump around the extra fluid in the body. In heart failure, eating too much salt can worsen symptoms such as swelling, bloating and shortness of breath.

Eating very salty foods can make you feel thirsty which could make it difficult to keep to your fluid allowance.

How much salt do I need?

Less than **2300mg** of sodium per day is desirable (equal to a teaspoon of salt). Reading food labels helps you know how much salt you're eating.

Reading food labels

Some foods labelled "reduced salt" can still contain high levels of sodium. Check the nutrition panel and use the *Quantity per 100g* column to compare different products.

Less than 120mg sodium per 100g is desirable. Avoid products which have

more than 400mg sodium per 100g of product.

Below is an example of a product label. Talk to your Dietitian to see if this is a suitable choice for you.

Example 1

Nutrition Information		
Servings per package: 1		
Serving size: 28g (1 bar)		
	Quantity per serving	Quantity per 100g
Energy	433 kJ (104 kcal)	1546 kJ (370 kcal)
Protein	2.9g	10.4g
Fat		
- total	0.5g	1.9g
- saturated	0.3g	1.2g
Carbohydrate		
- total	21.1g	75.4g
- sugars	8.7g	30.9g
Sodium	62mg	222mg

Although our body must have some salt, we often eat more than we need. There is no need to add extra salt to food because many common foods contain sodium, including fruit, vegetables, meat and cereals. As much as 75% of the salt we eat comes from packaged, tinned and processed foods.

Hints to reduce salt

- Choose products labelled “low salt” or “no added salt” (check nutrition panel)
- Choose fresh foods as often as possible
- Don’t add salt at the table or in cooking
- Use herbs, spices, garlic, pepper, onions, shallots, mushrooms, lemon, vinegar and tomatoes to add flavour to foods
- Make stock by boiling chicken or meat bones instead of using stock cubes or powders
- Use condiments and sauces sparingly
- Limit fast food and takeaway options
- Ask for lower salt options when eating out in restaurants
- Limit high-salt fluids including sports drinks and vegetable juice

The desire for salt is an acquired taste.
Your tastebuds will adjust in 4-6 weeks!

Flavour combinations to try instead of using salt

- Pork – garlic, lemon rind, coriander, apple sauce, ginger, mustard
 - Beef – bay leaf, thyme, sage
 - Lamb – mint, ginger, currant jelly, paprika, oregano, rosemary, garlic
 - Chicken – sage, tarragon, garlic, chilli
 - Fish – lemon juice, pepper, lime juice, chives, parsley, vinegar
 - Tomato – basil, garlic, black pepper, parsley, oregano
 - Potato – chives, paprika, mint, parsley, black pepper
- Carrots – ginger, cinnamon, honey, parsley

Common foods

Food	Choose (lower salt)	Avoid (high salt)
Bread and cereals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Varieties of bread lower in salt are preferable ✓ Fresh and dried pasta ✓ Crackers and biscuits lower in salt e.g. Ryvita, Vita-Weat, rice and corn cakes ✓ Rolled oats, porridge ✓ Weetbix, Sustain, Just Right, natural muesli, puffed wheat, oat or wheat bran ✓ Rice ✓ Plain flour, cornflour 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Savoury crackers ▪ Commercial sweet biscuits and shortbread with more than 400mg sodium per 100g ▪ Commercial croissants, pastry, cakes, scones, muffins with more than 400mg sodium per 100g ▪ Savoury breads and rolls, (products made with self-raising flour) ▪ Packet rice and pasta with flavouring ▪ Instant noodles ▪ Tinned spaghetti ▪ Cornflakes
Fruit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Fresh fruit ✓ Dried fruit ✓ Tinned fruit ✓ Fruit juice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Olives ▪ Pickled fruit
Vegetables	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Fresh & frozen vegetables ✓ Legumes (lentils, chickpeas, soup mix, soybeans, kidney beans) ✓ No added salt canned beans and vegetables ✓ Low salt tomato paste 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Pickled and canned vegetables ▪ Tomato or vegetable juice ▪ Baked beans or reduced salt baked beans
Milk, yoghurt, cheese	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Milk ✓ Yoghurt ✓ Custard, dairy desserts, ice cream ✓ Continental (quark) cheese ✓ Ricotta (check label) ✓ Cottage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Cheese: cheddar, brie, camembert, feta, parmesan ▪ Cheese spreads ▪ Processed cheese slices ▪ Reduced salt cheese (can still be high in salt)
Meat, fish, chicken, eggs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Fresh, unprocessed meat (lamb, beef, veal pork), chicken, turkey, fish and seafood ✓ Eggs ✓ Seafood tinned in spring water ✓ No added salt tinned seafood 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Cured, smoked, canned or salted meat (corned beef, ham, bacon, sausages, salami, brawn, pate, frankfurts) ▪ Meat pies, sausage rolls, fish fingers, crumbed or battered fish, hamburgers, BBQ chicken, pizza, chicken nuggets, Chinese takeaway food ▪ Tinned fish in brine or tomato sauce, anchovies
Fats and oils	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ No added salt or reduced-salt margarine 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Butter ▪ Margarine

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ No added salt peanut butter ✓ Oil ✓ Avocado 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Peanut butter ▪ Oils seasoned with salt
Drinks, snacks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Water ✓ Cordial, soft drink ✓ Unsalted nuts ✓ Unsalted popcorn ✓ Plain lollies, plain chocolate ✓ Milo, tea, coffee 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Sports drinks ▪ Vegetable juices ▪ Tinned soup ▪ Bonox ▪ Salted nuts and salted popcorn ▪ Pretzels, potato crisps, corn chips ▪ Dips, marinated & pickled foods
Sauces, condiments and canned foods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Low salt chutney, low salt gravies ✓ Homemade stock ✓ Jam, honey, syrup ✓ Herbs, spices, vinegar, lemon juice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Commercial sauces: pasta, soy, BBQ, steak, tomato, tartare, teriyaki, soy, Worcestershire, oyster, satay, black bean, plum sauce ▪ Yeast/meat extracts including Vegemite ▪ Gravy, Gravox, stock cubes ▪ Curry powder ▪ Salt, rock salt, sea salt, Himalayan salt, onion salt, chicken salt, celery salt, garlic salt, lemon pepper ▪ Pickles and relish
Miscellaneous		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Effervescent drinks ▪ Baking powder ▪ Self raising flour

Other information about salt

- Cramps are not due to a lack of salt. Drinking enough fluid and warming up before exercise can help. Also, check you're getting enough calcium (low-fat dairy products are the best source).
- Sea salt, Himalayan salt, chicken salt, vegetable salt, celery salt, lemon pepper and herb salt can still contain high levels of sodium. Check the nutrition panel and ingredients.

Sample Meal Plan

BREAKFAST

½ cup of rolled oats or muesli with low-fat milk

or 2 slices bread* preferably wholegrain with scrambled eggs, tomato, jam or honey

plus 1 piece of fresh fruit

Water

LUNCH

2 slices bread* **or** 1 roll - preferably wholegrain

with salad, avocado and fresh meat or fish in spring water

Plus 1 piece of fresh fruit or 1 tub of low-fat yoghurt

Water

DINNER

80-100g (cooked) lean meat, chicken (no skin) **or** fish

With ½ cup (cooked) plain pasta **or** rice

Plus plenty of other fresh vegetables (e.g. broccoli, cabbage, carrots, cauliflower, peas, spinach, zucchini)

and fruit salad **or** 1 tub low-fat yoghurt **or** ½ cup custard

Water

SNACK IDEAS

Raw, unsalted nuts

Fresh fruit or vegetable sticks

Low fat yoghurt

2 crackers* with tomato and ricotta cheese

Small bowl of unsalted popcorn

*Choose varieties lower in salt

Things I can do to help manage my heart failure

1.

2.

3.

For further information contact your Dietitian: _____

Phone: _____