

Reducing salt intake with heart failure

Why limit salt?

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

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 monitor your intake.

Reading food labels

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

Sodium (Na) content less than 120 mg per 100g is desirable. Avoid products containing more than 400mg sodium per 100g of product.

Below is an example product label.

Discuss with your Dietitian 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 Cal)	1546 kJ (370 Cal)
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 (or **sodium**), we often eat more than we need. There is no need to add extra salt to food as many common foods contain sodium, even fruit, vegetables, meat and cereals. As much as 75% of our salt intake comes from packed, tinned and processed foods.

Hints to reduce salt

- Choose products labelled “low salt” or “no added salt”.
- Choose fresh foods as much 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 containing 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

- 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"> ✓ Salt reduced bread is preferable ✓ Fresh and dried pasta ✓ Low salt crackers and biscuits e.g. Ryvita, Vitaweat, rice and corn cakes ✓ Rolled oats, porridge ✓ Weetbix, Sustain, natural muesli, Just Right, puffed wheat, oat or wheat bran ✓ Rice ✓ Plain flour, cornflour 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Savoury crackers ▪ Commercial sweet biscuits and shortbread with sodium content >400mg/100g ▪ Commercial croissants, pastry, cakes, scones, muffins with sodium content >400mg/100g ▪ Savoury breads and rolls, (products based on SR flour) ▪ Packet rice & 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 (still can 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 ✓ No added salt peanut butter ✓ Oil ✓ Avocado 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Butter ▪ Margarine ▪ 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 ✓ Curry powder ✓ 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 inc. <i>vegemite</i> ▪ Gravy, <i>gravox</i>, stock cubes ▪ Salt, garlic salt, rock salt, sea salt, onion salt, chicken salt, lemon pepper ▪ Pickles and relish
Miscellaneous		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Effervescent drinks ▪ Baking powder ▪ Self raising flour

Clearing up myths about salt

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



Queensland
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Sample Meal Plan

BREAKFAST

½ cup of rolled oats or muesli with low fat milk
Or 2 slices salt-reduced bread with scrambled eggs, tomato, jam or honey
plus 1 piece of fresh fruit
water

LUNCH

2 slices salt-reduced bread **or** 1 roll
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

100-120 g lean meat, chicken (no skin) **or** fish
With 1 cup plain pasta **or** 2/3 cup rice **or** sweet potato + corn
Plus plenty of other fresh vegetables (e.g. broccoli, cabbage, carrots, cauliflower,
peas, spinach, zucchini)
And fruit salad **or** ½ cup low fat yoghurt **or** ½ cup custard
water

SNACK IDEAS

Raw, unsalted nuts
Fresh fruit or vegetable sticks
Low fat yoghurt
2 Low salt crackers with tomato and ricotta cheese
Small bowl of unsalted popcorn

Things I can do to help manage my heart failure

1.

2.

3.

For further information contact your Dietitian: _____

Phone: _____