



## ***Know the Facts: How to plan meals if you have heart failure***



**A low salt diet is the best way to control your heart failure. Avoiding sodium will allow your heart to pump stronger and help avoid fluid retention.**

### **How can what I eat affect my heart?**

When you have “heart failure,” your heart is not able to pump as well as a healthy heart does. A smaller amount of blood flows to your organs. When the kidneys don’t get enough blood flow, they hold on to water and have a hard time getting rid of sodium (salt). This leads to edema (swelling) because the body retains too much fluid.

### **A low sodium diet is a very smart way to control your heart failure.**

### **How do I start a low sodium diet?**

Many of the foods we eat are pre-packaged and processed. These foods contain very high amounts of salt. When you start a low sodium diet, you may notice that food doesn’t taste the same. Give yourself time to adjust. Soon you will be noticing the taste of the food and not just salt!

### **Here are some other tips to make the most of your food.**

- **Get Fresh!** Try to eat 2-3 servings of fresh fruit or vegetables at each meal. Have 8-10 servings per day of fruit or vegetables as a healthy snack. Fruit and vegetables are low in sodium and calories, and high in fiber.
- **Don’t Shake!** Put your salt shaker away. Make it a habit to not add salt to your food.
- **Spice It Up!** Add spices and herbs instead of salt for flavor.
- **Read the Label!** Start reading labels on the food you buy. Choose foods that have “reduced” or “low sodium” listed on the label.

### **What can I do to spice up less expensive, packaged foods?**

- Try frozen vegetables which are generally low in sodium. Avoid the frozen vegetables that have sauces. These are very high in sodium.
- Rinse canned beans and vegetables under cold tap water and drain. This lowers the amount of sodium. Buy “Low Sodium” or “No Added Salt” products.
- Avoid using the “seasoning packets” that come in boxed rice or pasta. These contain a lot of salt. Add fresh or dried herbs instead.
- Make things from “scratch” to control the amount of salt in your food.
- Replace salty chips and crackers with crunchy, raw vegetables.
- Try unsalted nuts, unsalted crackers or graham crackers.
- Avoid lunch meats, hot dogs, ham, bacon, pickles, and olives.

**Call 1-888-545-1710 to speak to a nurse 24-hours a day  
or visit [www.WYHealthyTogether.com](http://www.WYHealthyTogether.com)**

*Disclaimer: Information or education provided in this fact sheet is not intended to replace medical advice from your healthcare provider. The information provided on this fact sheet is not all-inclusive of this topic.*

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