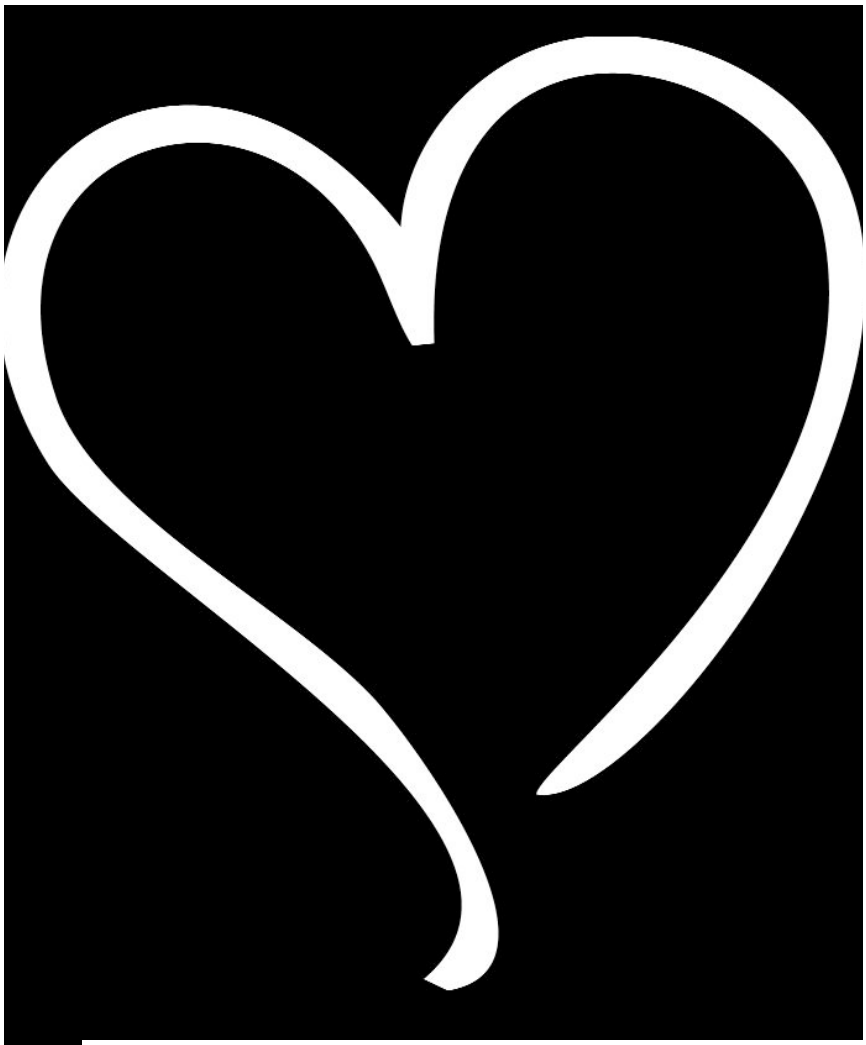

Congestive Heart Failure

a patient's guide

Prepared by

Acumentra HEALTH

www.acumentra.org

Revised and reprinted with permission from

The Jewish Hospital of St. Louis

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April 2002

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Contract to Take Care of Myself

To control my congestive heart failure, I agree to

- ♡ take my medicine as prescribed
- ♡ avoid salt and high-salt foods
- ♡ weigh myself daily
- ♡ rest between activities
- ♡ pace myself when exercising
- ♡ follow the diet my doctor recommends
- ♡ call my doctor immediately if I
  - ♡ gain weight suddenly
  - ♡ have increased swelling
  - ♡ feel side effects from my medication
  - ♡ have shortness of breath or a cough
  - ♡ do not feel well for any reason

(Signature)_____ (Date)_____

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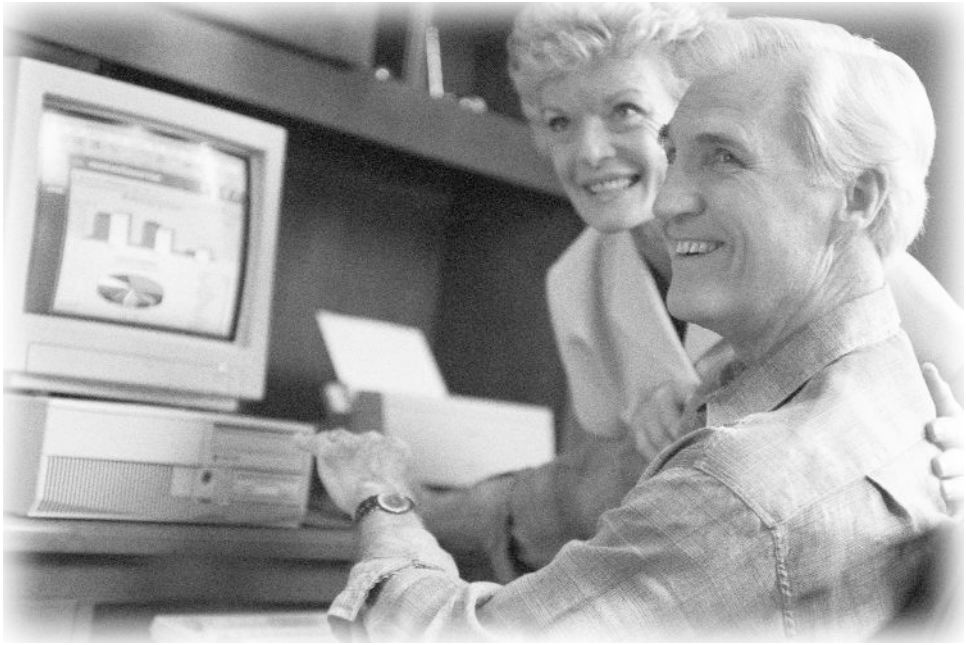
Important Phone Numbers

Important Phone Numbers — When to call for help

Call your doctor if. . .

- your ankles and legs become more swollen
- your shoes or socks get tight suddenly
- you have shortness of breath that does not go away with rest
- you gain two or three pounds in one day
- you gain four to five pounds in five days
- you do not have the energy for your normal activities
- you are dizzy or weak
- you have yellowish or blue-green vision
- your heartbeat changes (feels like a butterfly in your chest)
- you have chest pain
- you have blurred vision or you pass out
- you have a cough that does not go away

Doctor	Telephone
CHF Nurse Coordinator	Telephone
Social Worker	Telephone
Dietitian	Telephone
Home Care	Telephone
Pharmacy	Telephone
Others	Telephone
Others	Telephone



Understanding

Congestive Heart Failure

Understanding Congestive Heart Failure

Congestive heart failure (CHF) is one of the more common heart problems in our country, increasing in frequency with advancing age.

What is CHF? What causes it? What are its symptoms? What can you do to take care of yourself? Can CHF be treated with medications? These are just a few of the questions you may have about CHF. This guide answers these questions and explains what you can do to help keep your CHF under control.

What is congestive heart failure?

Congestive heart failure occurs when your heart is not able to pump enough blood to meet the needs of the rest of your body. If you have CHF,

- blood and extra fluid may back up into your lungs, making it difficult for you to breathe
- swelling in your ankles and legs (called **edema**) may occur
- you may experience excess fatigue with exercise

What causes congestive heart failure?

There are many causes of CHF, but in each case one or more parts of the heart does not work well. The most common cause of CHF is a weakening of the heart muscle itself. This may occur after a heart attack or if your blood pressure is too high for a long time.

Drinking too much alcohol for many years can also cause the heart to enlarge and weaken. Occasionally, weakness of the heart muscle occurs after an infection. Sometimes the cause of the weakness cannot be found. This is known as **cardiomyopathy**.

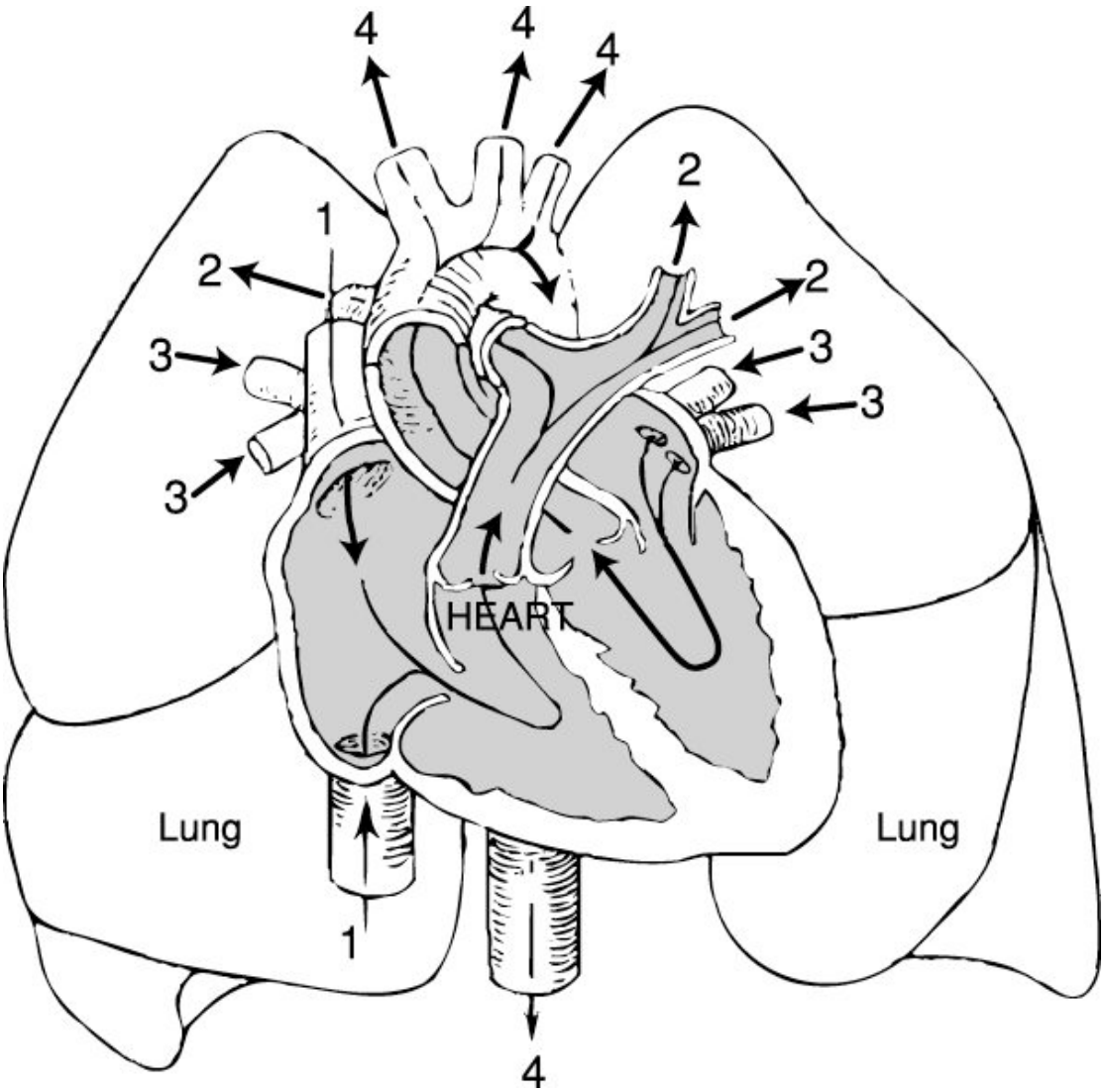
Another common cause of CHF is an abnormally functioning heart valve. Heart valves open and close to make sure that the blood keeps moving in the right direction. Sometimes a valve becomes narrowed. This is called **stenosis**. Stenosis prevents the blood from moving forward. A "leaky" valve can also cause CHF by allowing the blood to flow backwards. This is called **regurgitation.**

CHF may occur if the heart suddenly beats too fast or too slow. When the heart is beating too fast or slow, it cannot pump blood properly to the rest of the body. In older adults, a rapid, irregular beating of the upper heart chambers (called **atrial fibrillation**) is a common cause of CHF.

Occasionally, CHF is related to medications. It may also occur following surgery or in association with other illnesses, such as a heart attack.

CHF cannot be cured, but it can be controlled. With proper treatment and lifestyle changes, you can slow the progression of CHF and improve your chances of survival.

How Blood Moves Through the Heart



1- Blood flows from the body into the heart.

2- Heart pumps blood without oxygen into the lungs.

3- Blood picks up oxygen in the lungs and flows into the heart.

4- Heart pumps blood with oxygen back to the body.

What are the symptoms of congestive heart failure?

The most common symptoms of CHF are related to excess fluid build-up or to the inability of the heart to pump enough blood to the muscles or brain. You may or may not have the most common symptoms of CHF, which are listed below. Because these symptoms may also be caused by problems other than CHF, it is important that you consult your doctor. Your doctor can determine the cause and proper treatment of your symptoms.

• Shortness of breath and cough

Shortness of breath occurs when fluid collects in your lungs, making it difficult for you to breathe. Shortness of breath may be worse during certain activities, such as walking up stairs, or it may be worse when lying flat. Sitting quietly or sleeping on two or three pillows may make breathing easier. Occasionally, CHF causes a persistent cough (a cough that doesn't go away). The cough tends to be worse at night.

• Swelling of the feet, ankles, and legs

Extra fluid may collect in your feet, ankles, and legs. This leads to swelling and the sensation that your shoes and socks are too tight. The swelling usually starts in your feet and ankles. As more and more fluid builds up, the swelling may gradually extend up your legs almost to your waist. When CHF is the cause of the swelling, both legs are usually involved, but not always equally.

• Weight gain

When your body retains extra fluid, your weight goes up. Sometimes this happens quite rapidly (up to two or three pounds in a day). This type of weight gain almost always means that your body is holding onto too much salt and therefore too much water. In other cases, slow and progressive weight gain may be a sign that your CHF is getting out of control.

• Tiredness or fatigue

When your heart is working harder to pump blood and oxygen to your brain and muscles, you may feel more tired than usual. You may notice that you do not have enough energy for your normal activities. Although there are many other causes of fatigue, this symptom may mean your CHF is getting worse, particularly if some of the other symptoms are also present.

What You Can Do to Take Care of Yourself

What You Can Do to Take Care of Yourself

The Basics

Although the treatment of CHF will usually help you feel better, there is no real cure. There are, however, several things you can do to help keep your CHF under control.

1. Take your medicines *exactly* as your doctor has prescribed them.

Avoid missing doses. Never take two doses at once. (A slotted pill box may help you remember when to take your medicines.) **Do not take over-the-counter medications without your doctor's knowledge, including vitamins, herbs, or remedies from a health food store.** Some over-the-counter drugs, such as Advil®, Motrin®, or Nuprin® (ibuprofen), Aleve® (naproxen), and Orudis® (ketoproxen), may make your CHF worse.

Record the medications you take on your **Medication Schedule.** Bring your **Medication Schedule** with you when you visit your doctor. If you have any questions about your medications, please call your doctor.

2. Follow your diet closely.

"Cheating" on your diet may make your CHF worse and lead to the need for urgent medical care. If you are unsure whether certain foods are "okay," please ask your doctor, nurse, or dietitian.

Do not eat a large amount of salt (sodium) or salty foods at any one time.

3. Weigh yourself daily.

Weigh yourself on the **same scale** every morning after urinating and before eating. Be sure your scale is on a hard surface—**not on a rug.** Record your weight on your **Daily Weight Diary.** Bring your **Daily Weight Diary** with you when you visit your doctor. Gaining weight may mean that fluid build-up is occurring again.

4. **Make an appointment with your doctor to get vaccinated against influenza (the flu) every fall.**

Fall (October to December) is the best time to get vaccinated — before the flu season begins. **Be sure to tell your doctor** or nurse if you have a serious allergy to eggs, or if you have ever had a serious allergic reaction or other problem after a flu shot.

Also, **be sure to get vaccinated against pneumococcal infection if you are 65 or older.** In most cases, one pneumococcal vaccination lasts a lifetime. You can get a pneumococcal vaccination any time during the year. A pneumococcal vaccination protects you against some types of pneumonia, meningitis, and blood-stream infection.

5. **Call your doctor or nurse if you begin feeling worse or if any of the following problems occur:**

- sudden weight gain (two to three pounds in one day)
- weight gain of four to five pounds in five days
- significant loss of appetite with weight loss
- increased shortness of breath, especially when lying down
- increased swelling of the legs
- a cough that does not go away
- any side effects from medication

Many of these problems can be treated. If they go untreated, they may cause you to be admitted to the hospital.

Remember, whenever you feel worse, ask your doctor or nurse for help.

Medication Schedule*

- Take your medications according to your doctor's instructions.
- If you miss a dose, **do not take two doses at once.**
- Do not skip doses unless instructed by your doctor to do so.
- Notify your doctor if you think you have side effects.
- Do not stop any medications without your doctor's instructions.
- Store all medications in original containers away from heat and light.
- Keep all medications out of the reach of children.

Medication, Dose, and Instructions	Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner	Bedtime

*Suggestion: Make copies of this page before using.
This form is available online at www.acumentra.org.

Daily Weight Diary*

Weight at last doctor's visit _____ Date _____

Weight at the end of last month _____ Date _____

MONTH _____

Date	Weight	Date	Weight	Date	Weight
1		12		23	
2		13		24	
3		14		25	
4		15		26	
5		16		27	
6		17		28	
7		18		29	
8		19		30	
9		20		31	
10		21			
11		22			

Weigh yourself **on the same scale** every morning before eating and after urinating. Be sure your scale is on a hard surface—**not on a rug**. Write your weight on this chart. At the beginning of each month, enter your weight from the last day of the previous month at the top of the chart under "Weight at the end of last month."

NOTE: If you gain two to three pounds in one day or four to five pounds in five days, **call your doctor**. Bring this **Daily Weight Diary** with you when you visit your doctor's office.

*Suggestion: Make copies of this page before using.
This form is available online at www.acumentra.org.

Directions

from Your Healthcare Provider

Directions from Your Healthcare Provider

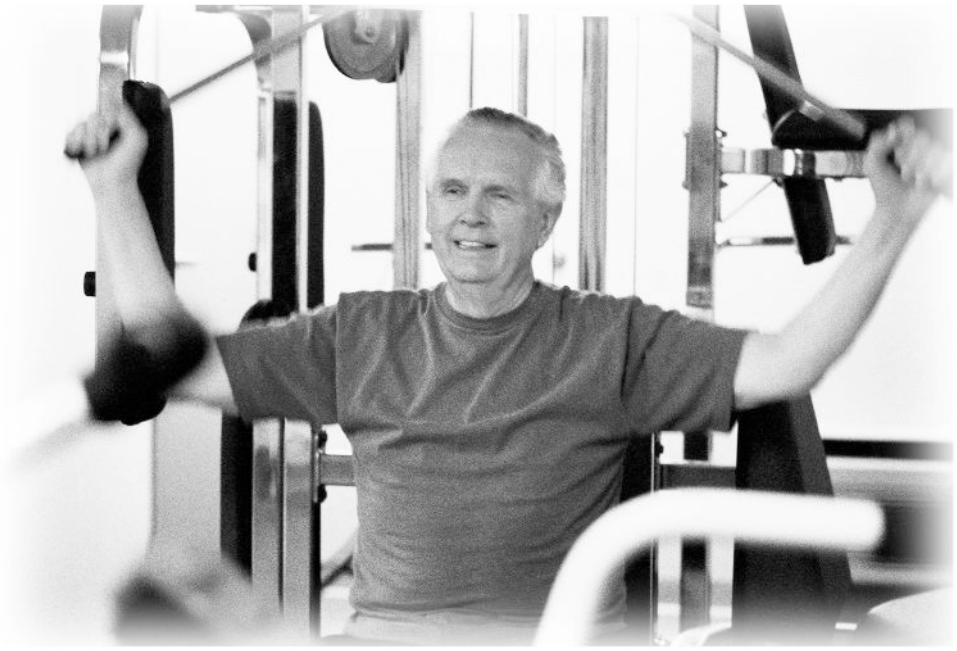
To feel your best, it is important that you understand and follow these directions from your healthcare provider. (Be sure your healthcare provider fills out this page.)

Medication:

Activity:

Diet:

Weight:



Lifestyle Changes

Lifestyle Changes

Your doctor will probably recommend some changes in your daily activities, exercise, and diet. These changes will depend largely on what your habits were before you were diagnosed with CHF, on the cause of your CHF, and on how well your heart is responding to treatment.

Activity

Your doctor will regulate your activity depending on your condition. Treat activities like bathing, shaving, eating, and dressing as physical exercises, spacing them over time, doing them at a slow to moderate pace, and resting after each one. Resting does not necessarily mean sleeping. You can rest by sitting quietly in a chair for 20 to 30 minutes. Later, as the medications begin to work and you begin to feel better, you will be encouraged to increase your activity.

Exercise

Regular exercise, such as walking or swimming, helps to keep the heart strong, lower anxiety, and control weight and blood pressure. **The kind of exercises you may do and the level at which you may exercise depend on the severity of your CHF.** Check with your healthcare provider for advice.

When you exercise, **follow these important guidelines:**

1. Pace yourself. Regular exercise should not wear you out. It should increase your ability to do more.
2. Start by doing warm-up and stretching exercises.
3. Do not exercise immediately after meals.
4. Do not exercise in extreme heat or cold.
5. Stop exercising **IMMEDIATELY** if you have chest pain, marked shortness of breath, or if you do not feel well for any reason.
6. Finish with cool-down activities.

Don't Smoke.

If you can't stop smoking by yourself, ask your healthcare provider for help.

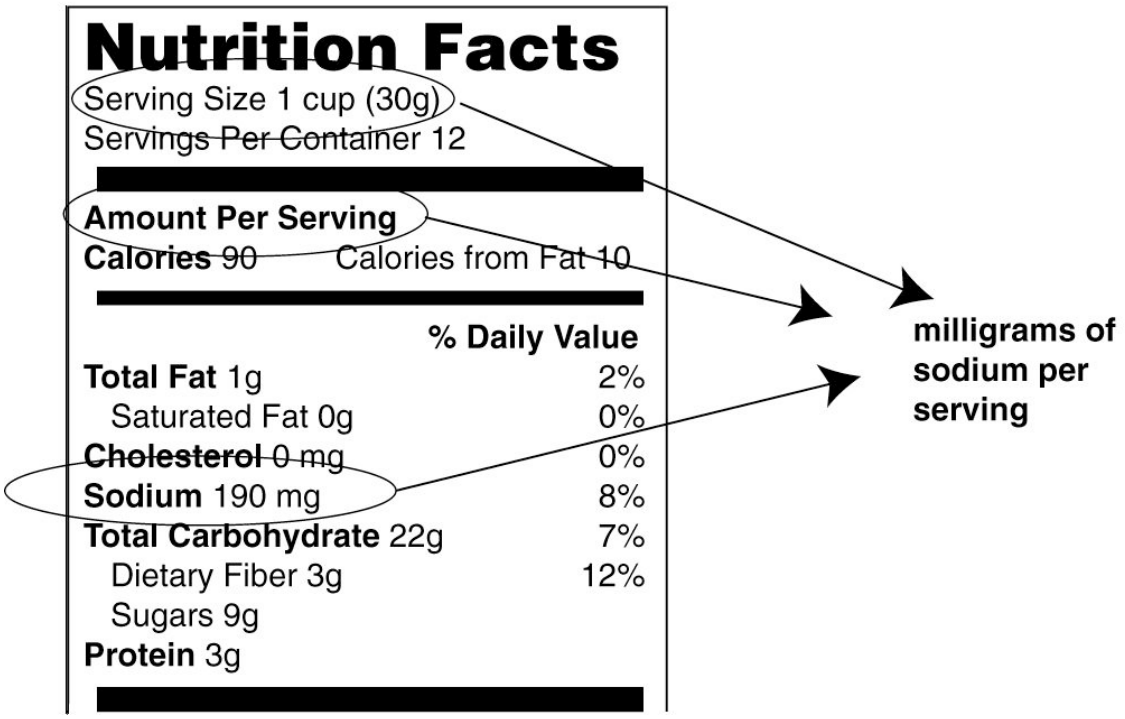
Diet

Your doctor will probably recommend a low-salt (low-sodium) diet. Salt makes the body hold onto water and may lead to fluid build-up. Your doctor, nurse, or dietitian can give you more information about your diet and special instructions.

Ask your healthcare provider how many milligrams (mg.) of salt (sodium) you can have each day. A low-salt diet usually allows 2,000 to 3,000 mg. of sodium, but **your sodium allowance may vary depending on your health.**

In planning your diet, remember to read the label on packaged and canned foods for information on sodium (salt) content.

Sample Label



Many of the foods listed below contain large amounts of salt and **should be avoided:**

- boxed foods and dinners (such as macaroni and cheese)
- breaded fish
- canned meats, such as ham
- processed cheeses
- cottage cheese and cheese spreads
- salted chips and salted crackers
- tomato sauce and vegetable juices
- "deli" foods, such as coleslaw, potato salad, and macaroni salad
- premixed gravies and processed foods
- prepared meats, such as hot dogs, bologna, and salami
- canned soups and canned vegetables
- Chinese food
- "fast food"
- pickled vegetables, sauerkraut
- pickles and olives

Many prepared foods are available in lower-sodium versions. If you don't know the sodium content of a particular food, **ask your dietitian**.

IMPORTANT:

- **Check with your doctor before using a salt substitute.**
- **When buying food at the fish or meat counter or from the deli,** be sure to request information about the sodium content.
- **TV dinners** and other frozen food entrees may contain large amounts of sodium. Most "regular" TV dinners have about 800 mg. or more of sodium for a serving size of 7 oz. to 13 oz.

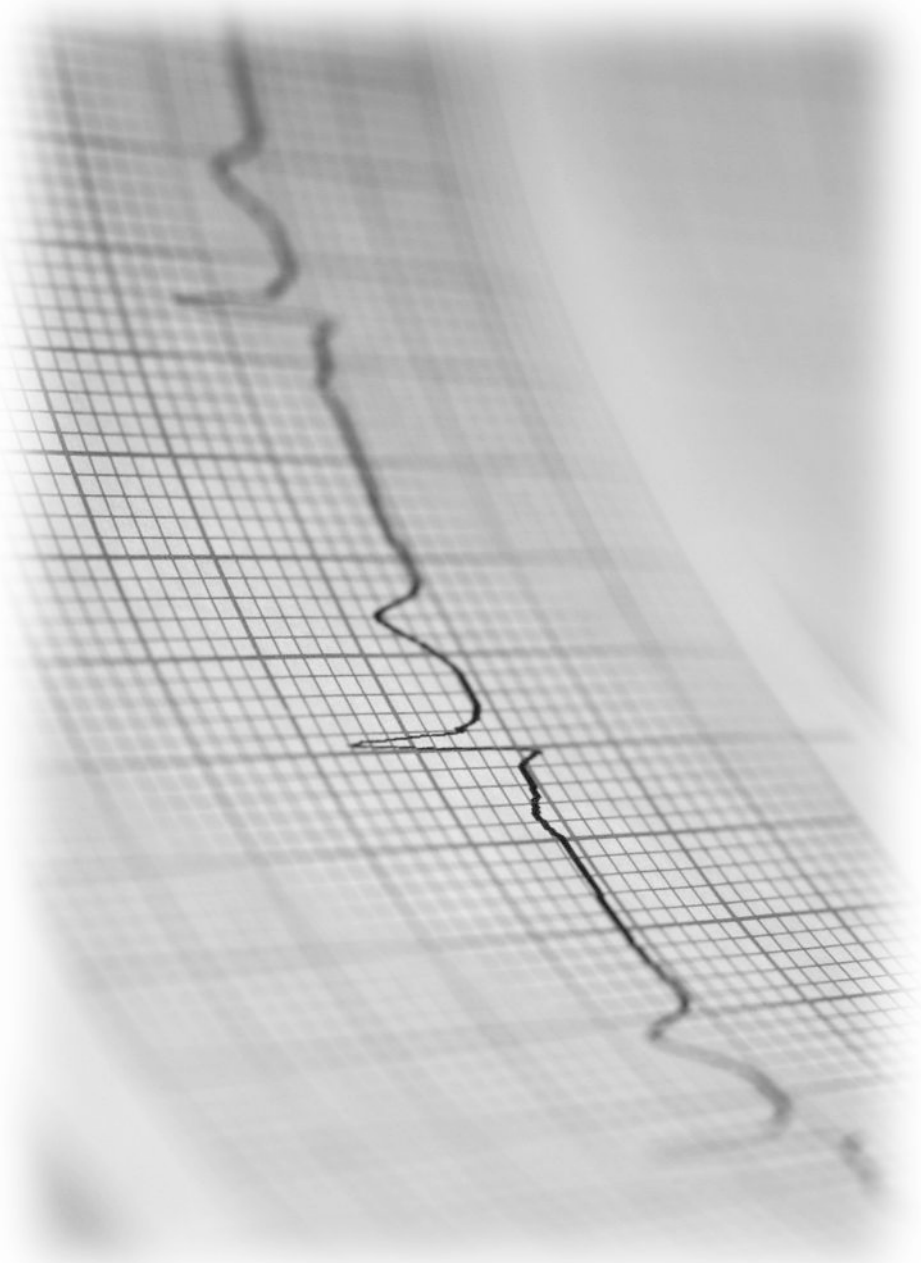
Caution: Don't be fooled by claims on the label. Terms like "healthy" may mean "low fat" but not necessarily "low sodium." Be sure to read the sodium (salt) content on the label.

- Limit your use of **buttermilk** to one 8-ounce glass per day.
- **One teaspoon of salt** equals about **2,300 mg. of sodium.**

See Sodium Content of Foods at the back of this guide.

Diagnosing

Congestive Heart Failure



Diagnosing Congestive Heart Failure

After asking you about your symptoms and examining your neck, heart, lungs, abdomen, and legs, your doctor will usually be able to tell if you have CHF. Often a chest x-ray will confirm the diagnosis and determine the extent of fluid build-up in your lungs.

Your doctor may recommend additional tests to measure your heart function and to determine the cause of your CHF. Commonly used heart tests include

- **Electrocardiogram (EKG/ECG)**
  This is helpful in determining whether you have had a heart attack or if there is a problem with your heart rhythm.

- **Echocardiogram (Echo)**
  This sound-wave picture of your heart gives information about how well your heart muscle is pumping and whether you have a problem with any of your heart valves.

- **Holter Internal Monitor Recording**
  This is a special monitoring device that you wear on your chest to record changes in the regularity of your heartbeat.

- **Stress Tests**
  Stress tests are most commonly used to see if there is blockage in the **arteries (blood vessels)** supplying blood to your heart. Each stress test is designed to see how your heart responds to exercise or other activities. Following a stress test, your doctor may order an echocardiogram or a scan of the heart. One type of stress test involves walking on a treadmill for a period of time while your heart rhythm is being monitored.

- **Cardiac Catheterization (angiogram, arteriogram or cath)**
  A cardiac catheterization may be needed to get important information about your heart that cannot be obtained in any other way. During cardiac catheterization, a small plastic tube is passed into the heart. This test is usually done to see if there are any blockages in the arteries supplying blood to your heart. It also provides information about heart function and heart valves, and helps your doctor decide on the best treatment for your heart condition.

- **Other Tests**
  There are a variety of other tests, such as RVG and MUGA (nuclear medicine scans). In these tests, an injection is given into your arm **vein**. Then special x-rays are taken to measure precisely how well your heart muscle is pumping.

Your healthcare provider can provide additional information and can answer any questions about these and other tests that may be ordered.

Treating
Congestive Heart Failure

Treating Congestive Heart Failure

Medications

Many medications can help your heart pump better and reduce the extra fluid. The following medicines are commonly used to treat CHF:

Diuretics (water pills)

Action: Diuretics reduce the amount of salt and water in the body by increasing the flow of urine. Because diuretics may cause you to urinate frequently, you should take them early in the day. Diuretics may be given in pill form or through your vein (**IV**). An IV diuretic gets rid of the fluid faster and should help you feel better. Commonly used diuretics include Lasix® (furosemide), Bumex®, Esidrix® (HCTZ), Dyazide®, Maxzide®, Zaroxolyn® (metolazone), Hygroton®, Lozol®, and Aldactone® (spironolactone). Diuretics are also used to treat high blood pressure in patients without CHF.

NOTE: Some diuretics, such as Lasix®, may increase blood sugar in patients who have diabetes. If you have diabetes, it is important that you monitor your blood sugar closely.

Side effects: Call your doctor if you experience dizziness, lightheadedness, increasing weakness, or leg cramps. To prevent some of these side effects, your doctor may have you take potassium with certain diuretics.

Digoxin (Lanoxin®)

Action: Digoxin, also known as Lanoxin® or digitalis, works directly on the heart muscle to strengthen and regulate the heartbeat. A stronger, regular heartbeat leads to better blood circulation and reduced swelling of legs and ankles. Digoxin is also used to treat certain kinds of fast heartbeat, such as **atrial fibrillation**.

NOTE: Check with your doctor before taking antacids or eating oat bran.

Side effects: **Call your doctor if** you experience a loss of appetite, a bad taste in your mouth, nausea or vomiting, diarrhea, unusual tiredness or weakness, yellowish or blue-green vision, dizziness or light- headedness, confusion, or a change in the regularity of your heartbeat.

Vasodilators

Action: Vasodilators make it easier for your heart to pump by relaxing the **blood vessels**. Commonly used vasodilators include Transderm Nitro®, Nitrodur®, Nitrostat® (nitroglycerin, which is also used to treat chest pain), Isordil®, Sorbitrate® (isosorbide dinitrate), Monoket®, Ismo®, Imdur® (isosorbide mononitrate), and Apresoline® (hydralazine).

Side effects: **Call your doctor if** you experience dizziness or lightheadedness, blurred vision, confusion, or if you pass out. Other side effects may also occur. Ask your doctor if there is anything else that you need to be aware of.

ACE Inhibitors

Action: ACE (angiotensin-converting enzyme) inhibitors, like vasodilators, make it easier for your heart to pump by relaxing the **blood vessels**. They also protect kidneys from damage. There are several commonly used ACE inhibitors, such as captopril, enalapril, lisinopril, fosinopril, benazepril, and quinapril. Several ACE inhibitors are also effective in treating high blood pressure and other conditions.

Do not take ACE inhibitors if you think you are pregnant.

Side effects: **Call your doctor if** you experience fatigue, headache, dry cough, vomiting, diarrhea, nausea, or dizziness or lightheadedness when sitting or standing.

Rare side effects: If you experience swelling of your face, mouth, hands, or feet or if you have difficulty breathing or swallowing, contact your doctor immediately.

Beta Blockers

Action: Beta blockers, such as Coreg® (carvedilol), may be used for the long-term management of stable patients with mild to moderate heart failure. They are used to slow the progression of heart failure and may improve heart function.

Side effects: **Call your doctor if** you experience dizziness or lightheadedness, wheezing or increased coughing, low blood pressure or slow pulse, or a change in the regularity of your heartbeat. As with many medications, side effects may occur early in therapy but may not require you to stop taking carvedilol. **Always take carvedilol with food. Always take carvedilol and ACE inhibitors two hours apart.**

Cholesterol-Lowering Medications

Action: Some cholesterol-lowering medicines (also called "lipid-lowering agents") can reduce the risk of dying, the risk of heart attack, and the need for **coronary bypass** and **balloon angioplasty** procedures.

NOTE: If your doctor has prescribed cholesterol-lowering medicines for you, **it is IMPORTANT that you continue to take them as instructed.**

Side effects: Ask your doctor or pharmacist for a list of the possible side effects for the specific cholesterol-lowering medicine you are taking.

Rare side effects: **If you experience any unexplained muscle pain, muscle tenderness, or muscle weakness, call your doctor immediately.**

The above list includes only the most commonly used medications. Depending on the cause of your CHF, your doctor may recommend other or newer medications as they become available.

If you have any questions about your medications, call your doctor.

Remember: Do not take over-the-counter medications without your doctor's knowledge.

Other Treatment

Sometimes CHF cannot be controlled well with medications alone and may require additional treatment. If you have blocked arteries or a narrowed or leaky heart valve, open heart surgery may be required.

Also, if you have had a heart attack, your doctor many recommend surgery to remove scar tissue or an **aneurysm** (bulge) that has formed on your heart. In most cases, an angiogram will be done before surgery. If surgery is recommended, a special team will talk to you to explain the procedure and what to expect.

Your doctor may recommend medications that stimulate your heart muscle and help it pump better. These medications may be given to you through a tube that is inserted in your vein (**IV**) and may require you to be in an intensive care unit.

Long-Term Outlook

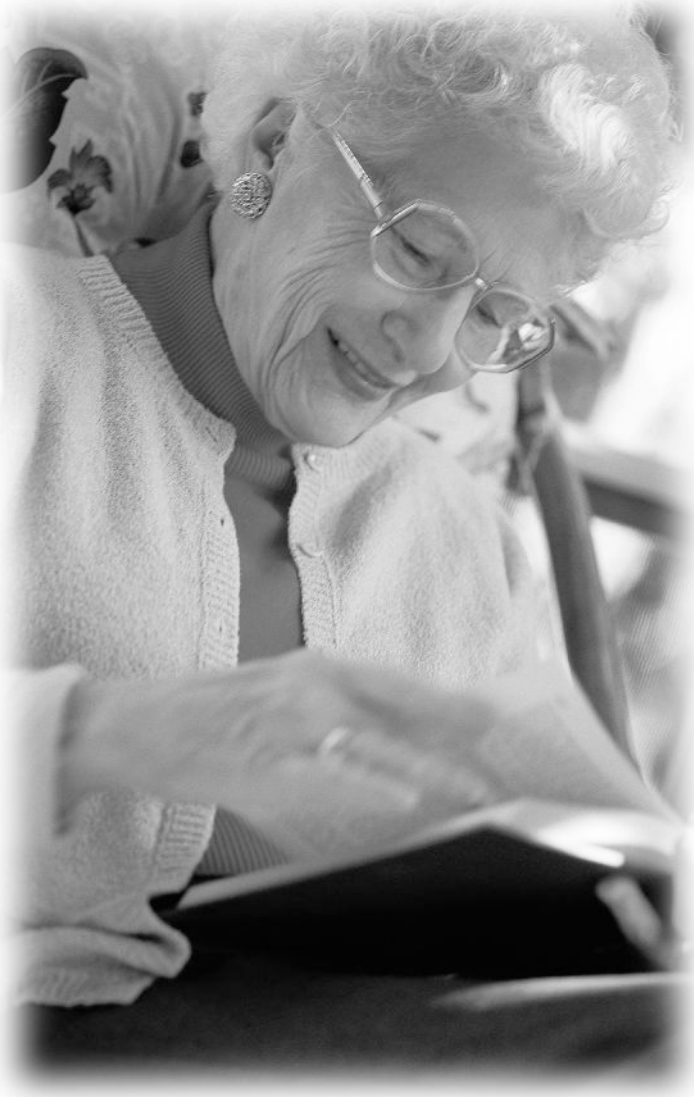
The long-term outlook is difficult to predict, since it depends on the cause of your CHF and on how well your heart responds to treatment. Although there are no easy solutions, with proper treatment and lifestyle changes, it is possible for you to control your CHF and continue to carry on a productive life.

Your doctor has designed a treatment plan especially for you. If you carefully follow your doctor's advice, you have a good chance of improving your condition. If you have any questions, please ask your doctor or nurse.

Glossary

Glossary

aneurysm	a bulge in the heart wall or in a blood vessel
artery	a blood vessel that carries blood and oxygen away from the heart to parts of the body
atrial fibrillation	rapid, irregular beating of the heart
balloon angioplasty	using a balloon to stretch a narrow section of a coronary (heart) artery
blood vessel	an artery or a vein
cardiomyopathy	a condition in which the cause of the weakened heart muscle is unknown
catheter	a tubular instrument that allows fluid to pass from, or into, a body cavity
coronary bypass	using a vein from the leg or an artery from the chest to by-pass a blocked heart artery
edema	the build-up of an excessive amount of fluid, also known as swelling
IV	intravenous, or within a vein or veins
regurgitation	the backward flow of blood through an abnormally functioning or "leaky" heart valve
stenosis	the narrowing of a heart valve
vein	a blood vessel that carries blood to the heart



Reading List

Reading List

Free Publications from the American Heart Association

About High Blood Pressure

The American Heart Association Diet: An Eating Plan for Healthy Americans

Cholesterol and Your Heart

Congestive Heart Failure: What You Should Know

Controlling Your Risk Factors for Heart Attack

Exercise and Your Heart: A Guide to Physical Activity

The Great Salt Shake-Up

Helping Your Doctor Treat Your High Blood Pressure

Managing Your Weight

Now You're Cookin' (low-sodium recipes)

Nutritious Nibbles: A Guide to Healthy Snacking

Salt, Sodium and Blood Pressure

Savor the Flavors: How to Choose Healthful Meals When Dining Out

Silent Epidemic: The Truth About Women and Heart Disease

Walking . . . the Natural Way to Fun and Fitness

Call: The American Heart Association: 1-800-242-8721 (national)

Oregon Affiliate: 1-800-452-9445

Publications Available in Local Bookstores

The American Heart Association Low-Fat, Low Cholesterol Cookbook

The American Heart Association Low-Salt Cookbook

The American Heart Association Quick and Easy Cookbook

The American Heart Association Your Heart: an Owner's Manual

Publications Available in Local Bookstores (cont.)

American Heart Association and the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute

Step by Step: Eating to Lower Your High Blood Cholesterol
Dallas: American Heart Association, 1994

Marc A. Silver, MD

Success with Heart Failure:
Help and Hope for Those with Congestive Heart Failure
New York: Plenum Press, 1998

Free Publications from the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ)

Living with Heart Disease: Is It Heart Failure?
(Consumer Guideline No. 11)
(AHRQ Publication. No. 94-0614)
Available at www.ahrq.gov/consumer
Select Consumer Versions of Clinical Practice Guidelines, under Health Conditions/Diseases.

Useful Web Sites

www.acumentra.org—a healthcare quality resource for Medicare beneficiaries, healthcare providers, and physicians. Funded by the Health Care Financing Administration. Select Programs and Projects/Quality Improvement Projects/Heart Failure.

The following listing of online resources is provided as a service and does not constitute an endorsement of any of the organizations by Acumentra Health or the federal government. Acumentra Health is not responsible for the content of these Web sites.

www.abouthf.org—sponsored by the Heart Failure Society of America (HFSA). HFSA is a forum for medical professionals, scientists, and corporate affiliates dedicated to heart failure research and patient care.

Useful Web Sites (cont.)

www.heartfailure.org—Heart Failure Online—an educational site dedicated to heart failure patients.

www.heartinfo.org—an educational site dedicated to empowering individuals with heart disease and those who want to lower risk factors for heart disease to engage in informed dialogues with their healthcare professionals.

www.nhlbi.nih.gov/index—a federal government site for the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute, National Institutes of Health, Public Health Service, U.S. Dept. of Health & Human Services.

www.healthfinder.gov—a consumer-oriented health education site provided by the federal government; search for "heart failure."

www.nationalheartfailure.org—National Heart Failure Quality Improvement Project, funded by the Health Care Financing Administration to improve the quality of healthcare for Medicare beneficiaries.

www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/heart—a fun site from the acclaimed PBS NOVA science series that covers heart problems and has several interactive resources.

www.americanheart.org—American Heart Association—comprehensive resource for cardiovascular diseases; basic tutorial about CHF.

www.clevelandclinic.org/heartcenter—Cleveland Clinic Heart Center—contains tutorials and links for patient education.

Sodium Content of Foods

Tables reprinted with permission from
Success with Heart Failure:
Help and Hope for Those with Congestive Heart Failure
New Edition, 1998
by
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Sodium Content of Foods

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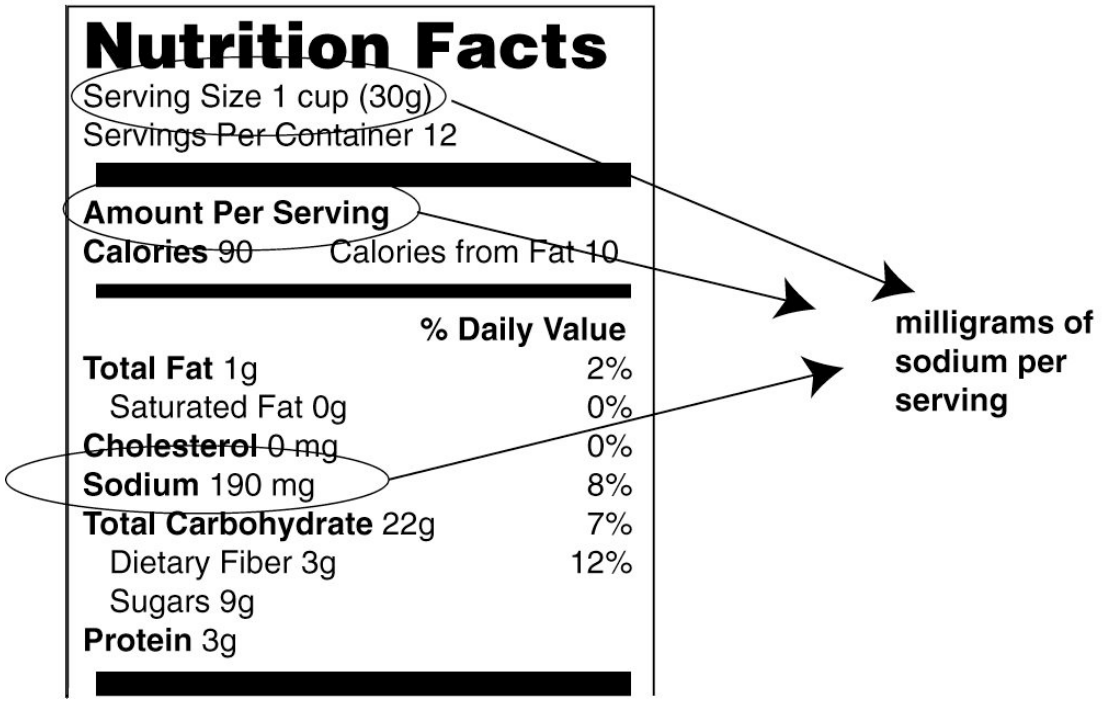

Read the Label

In planning your diet, remember to **read the label on packaged and canned foods for information on sodium (salt) content.**

Many of the foods listed below contain large amounts of salt and **should be avoided:**

- boxed foods and dinners (such as macaroni and cheese)
- breaded fish
- canned meats, such as ham
- processed cheeses
- cottage cheese and cheese spreads
- salted chips and salted crackers
- tomato sauce and vegetable juices
- "deli" foods, such as coleslaw, potato salad, and macaroni salad
- premixed gravies and processed foods
- prepared meats, such as hot dogs, bologna, and salami
- canned soups and canned vegetables
- Chinese food
- "fast food"
- pickled vegetables, sauerkraut
- pickles and olives

Many prepared foods are available in lower-sodium versions. If you don't know the sodium content of a particular food, **ask your dietitian.**

IMPORTANT:

- **Check with your doctor before using a salt substitute**.
- **When buying food at the fish or meat counter or from the deli,** be sure to request information about the sodium content.

- **TV dinners** and other frozen food entrees may contain large amounts of sodium. Most "regular" TV dinners have about 800 mg. or more of sodium for a serving size of 7 oz. to 13 oz.

Caution: Don't be fooled by claims on the label. Terms like "healthy" may mean "low fat" but not necessarily "low sodium." Be sure to read sodium (salt) content on the label.

- Limit your use of **buttermilk** to one 8-ounce glass per day.
- **One teaspoon of salt** equals about **2,300 mg. of sodium**.

Remember: A low-salt diet usually allows 2,000 to 3,000 mg. of sodium, but **your sodium allowance may vary depending on your health**. Be sure to follow your doctor's or dietitian's recommendations.

Dining at Home

Dining at Home: Sodium Content of Common Foods

Food	Milligrams* of Sodium
Breakfast	
Bacon pork (2 strips)	202
Bagel with 1 oz. cream cheese	283
Bran muffin	168
Coffee, brewed (1 cup)	8
Coffee cake (1 piece)	310
Cornflakes (1 cup) with low-fat milk	361
Corn muffin	192
Danish pastry, plain	249
Doughnut, plain	139
English muffin	358
French toast (2 slices)	514
Fried egg, large (1)	162
Fruit yogurt, low-fat (1 cup)	133
Grapefruit, half	0
Hash browns (1 cup)	54

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Dining at Home: Sodium Content of Common Foods

Food	Milligrams* of Sodium
Breakfast, cont.	
Link sausages, pork (2)	336
Oatmeal, cooked (1 cup)	1
Orange juice, frozen (1 cup)	2
Pancakes (2)	320
Tea, brewed (1 cup)	8
Toast, wheat (1 slice)	153
Tomato juice, canned (1 cup)	**882**
Two-egg omelet, ham and cheese	598
Lunch	
Cheeseburger, fast food	**750**
Cheese pizza (1 slice)	261
Chef salad, ham and cheese (1 cup)	**1,134**
Chicken noodle soup (1 cup)	**1,107**
Chicken noodle soup, low-sodium, (1 cup)	36

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Dining at Home: Sodium Content of Common Foods

Food	Milligrams* of Sodium
Lunch, cont.	
Cola (12 oz.)	12
Coleslaw (1/2 cup)	16
Corn chips (1 oz.)	164
Cottage cheese, low-fat (1 cup)	**918**
Diet cola (12 oz.)	24
Dill pickle (1 medium)	**928**
French fries (20), unsalted	30
Fruit salad (1 cup)	9
Green salad, tossed (1 cup)	53
Ham and cheese sandwich	**792**
Hamburger, fast food	500
Hot dog on bun	671
Potato chips (14 chips)	164
Potato salad (1 cup)	**1,323**
Roast beef sandwich	**792**

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Dining at Home: Sodium Content of Common Foods

Food	Milligrams* of Sodium
Lunch, cont.	
Tomato, whole (1)	10
Tuna salad (1 cup)	434
Vegetable beef soup (1 cup)	**957**
Vegetable soup, low-sodium (1 cup)	38
Dinner	
Beef burrito, fast food	746
Beef or pork chop suey, homemade (1 cup)	**1,052**
Beer (12 oz.)	24
Broccoli, raw/boiled (1 cup)	16
Broiled codfish (1 fillet)	141
Broiled pork chop	49
Broiled sirloin steak (4 oz.)	74
Chicken chow mein, homemade (1 cup)	**717**
Chili con carne (1 cup)	135

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Dining at Home: Sodium Content of Common Foods

Food	Milligrams* of Sodium
Dinner, cont.	
Dinner roll	144
Fettuccine Alfredo, frozen (1 portion)	**1,195**
Fish sticks (4 oz.)	651
Fried chicken breast	385
Green beans, french, frozen (1 cup)	17
Light beer (12 oz.)	12
Macaroni and cheese, homemade (1 cup)	**1,086**
Peas and carrots, frozen/boiled (1 cup)	110
Potato, peeled and boiled	7
Red wine (4 oz.)	76
Rice, cooked (1 cup)	4
Roast chicken breast	138
Roast turkey breast, without skin (1 cup)	89
Spaghetti with tomato-meat sauce (1 cup)	**1,009**
White wine (4 oz.)	72

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Dining at Home: Sodium Content of Common Foods

Food	Milligrams* of Sodium
Desserts	
Angel food cake (1 slice)	142
Apple pie (1 slice)	207
Banana	1
Brownie with nuts (1)	50
Cheesecake (1 slice)	189
Chocolate chip cookies (2)	76
Chocolate pudding (1 cup)	335
Devil's food cake with chocolate icing (1 slice)	180
Fresh pineapple (1 cup)	1
Fresh strawberries (1 cup)	2
Hot fudge sundae (2 scoops)	190
Lemon meringue pie (1 slice)	223
Oatmeal-raisin cookies (2)	74
Orange sherbet (1/2 cup)	44
Pound cake (1 slice)	58

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Dining at Home: Sodium Content of Common Foods

Food	Milligrams* of Sodium
Desserts, cont.	
Rice pudding with raisins (1 cup)	188
Vanilla ice cream (1/2 cup)	58
Yellow cake with white icing (1 slice)	191
Condiments	
Barbecue sauce (1/4 cup)	508
Brown gravy (1/4 cup)	31
Butter, regular (1 pat)	41
Butter, unsalted (1 pat)	Less than 1
Catsup (1 TBSP)	156
Cream cheese (1 TBSP)	85
Hollandaise sauce (1/4 cup)	284
Italian dressing (1 TBSP)	116
Italian dressing, low-calorie (1 TBSP)	118
Margarine (1 pat)	47

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Dining at Home: Sodium Content of Common Foods

Food	Milligrams* of Sodium
Condiments, cont.	
Mayonnaise (1 TBSP)	104
Mushroom gravy (1/4 cup)	340
Mustard, prepared (1 TBSP)	195
Pancake syrup (2 TBSP)	70
Parmesan cheese (1 TBSP)	116
Soy sauce (1 TBSP)	**1,029**
Thousand Island dressing (1 TBSP)	109
Thousand Island dressing, low-calorie (1 TBSP)	153
White sauce (1/4 cup)	199
Worcestershire sauce (1 TBSP)	147

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Notes

Dining Out

Dining Out: What to Order and What to Avoid

Menu Section	Recommended	Not Recommended*
Appetizers	Fruit juice	Soups, especially cream style
	Fresh or canned fruit	Fried vegetables or potato skins
	Gelatin	Vegetable juices
	Relish plate (with raw vegetables)	Relish plate (with preserved or pickled items)
Salads	Fresh vegetable salad served with lemon, vinegar, or low-calorie dressing	Coleslaw
	Sliced tomatoes	Macaroni or potato salad
	Fruit salad	Salad with excessive amounts of salad dressing
	Gelatin salad	Cottage cheese
Entrees	Any lean meat, fish or poultry that has been roasted, baked, boiled, or poached	Stews and casserole-type dishes
		Fatty, fried, or breaded meats
		Eggs
Vegetables	Stewed, steamed or boiled	Those in a sauce or au gratin
		Seasoned with butter or cooked in egg yolk
		Fried vegetables

***too high in fat and/or sodium**

Patients with **congestive heart failure** usually need a low-sodium diet. Your doctor will tell you how many milligrams of sodium you can have per day. **Be sure to follow your doctor's directions.** Remember, restaurant and deli food usually have more sodium than food you prepare at home.

Dining Out: What to Order and What to Avoid

Menu Section	Recommended	Not Recommended*
Potatoes and substitutes	Mashed, baked, boiled, or steamed potatoes	Fried potatoes
	Boiled or steamed rice	Creamed or au gratin potatoes
	Boiled noodles	Fried rice
		Noodles in a cream sauce
Breads	Hard or soft rolls	Crescents, butter rolls, popovers, and croissants
	Plain bread or toast	Sweet rolls, cakes, or coffee cake
	Unsalted crackers	Salted crackers or breads
	Breadsticks or Melba toast	
	Matzos and plain toast	
Condiments	Low-calorie salad dressing	Excess gravy
	Oil and vinegar (use oil sparingly)	
		Butter or cream
		Sour cream
		Cream cheese
		Bacon
		Mayonnaise-type salad dressing
		Cheese sauces

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Dining Out: What to Order and What to Avoid

Menu Section	Recommended	Not Recommended*
Desserts	Fresh fruit	Pastries, cakes, cream pies
	Angel food cake	Chocolate
	Sherbet or Italian ice	Ice cream
	Fruit sorbet or frozen nonfat or lowfat yogurt	
	Ice milk	
	Gelatin	
Beverages	Fruit juice	Milk shakes
	Skim milk	Chocolate milk
	Soft drinks	Whole milk
	Tea or coffee, preferably decaffeinated	
		Alcohol (unless allowed by physician)

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Fast Foods

Dining Out: Sodium Content of Fast Foods

Food	Portion	Milligrams* of Sodium
Kentucky Fried Chicken		
Original Recipe		
Wing	1	387
Center breast	1	532
Drumstick	1	269
Thigh	1	517
Extra-Crispy Recipe		
Wing	1	437
Center breast	1	**842**
Drumstick	1	346
Thigh	1	**766**
Buttermilk biscuits	1	521
Mashed potatoes with gravy	1	297
Coleslaw	1	171

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Dining Out: Sodium Content of Fast Foods

Food	Portion	Milligrams* of Sodium
McDonald's		
Egg McMuffin	1	**740**
Hot cakes with butter and syrup	1	640
Scrambled eggs	1	290
Pork sausage	1	350
Hash brown potatoes	1	330
Biscuit with sausage and egg	1	**1,250**
Hamburger	1	500
Cheeseburger	1	**750**
Quarter Pounder	1	718
Big Mac	1	**950**
Filet-O-Fish	1	**1,030**
McDLT	1	**990**
Chicken McNuggets	6 pieces	520
Chef salad	1	490
Chunky chicken salad	1	230

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Food	Portion	Milligrams* of Sodium
McDonald's, cont.		
French fries	1 small	**110**
Apple pie	1	240
Vanilla shake	1	170
Chocolate shake	1	240
Strawberry shake	1	170
McDonaldland cookies	1	300
Chocolate chip cookies	1	280
Pizza Hut		
Personal Pan Pizza		
Pepperoni	1 whole	**1,335**
Supreme	1 whole	**1,313**
Pan Pizza (The following portions are based on 2 slices of medium pizza.)		
Cheese		**940**
Pepperoni		**1,127**
Supreme		**1,363**
Super Supreme		**1,447**

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Dining Out: Sodium Content of Fast Foods

Food	Portion	Milligrams* of Sodium
Pizza Hut, cont. (The following portions are based on 2 slices of medium pizza.)		
Thin 'n Crispy Pizza		
Cheese		**867**
Pepperoni		**867**
Supreme		**1,328**
Super Supreme		**1,336**
Subway		
Subway Club	1	**839**
Turkey Sub	1	**839**
Tuna Sub	1	**905**
Steak Sub	1	**883**
Meatball Sub	1	**876**
Ham Sub	1	**839**
Roast Beef Sub	1	**839**
Seafood & Crab Sub	1	**1,306**
Subway chef salad without dressing	1	479

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Food	Portion	Milligrams* of Sodium
Taco Bell		
Taco	1	276
Taco Light	1	594
Soft Taco	1	516
Soft Taco Supreme	1	516
Tostada	1	596
Taco salad with salsa	1	**1,286**
Taco salad without shell	1	**1,056**
Steak fajitas	1	485
Chicken fajitas	1	619
Wendy's		
Omelet #3: Ham, cheese, onion, green pepper	1	485
Omelet #4: Mushroom, onion, green pepper	1	200
Breakfast sandwich	1	**770**
French toast	2	**850**
Single hamburger (1/4 lb.) on white bun	1	360
Bacon cheeseburger (1/4 lb.) on white bun	1	**780**

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Food	Portion	Milligrams* of Sodium
Wendy's, cont.		
Frosty	medium - 12 oz.	220
Plain baked potato	1	60
Baked potato with chili and cheese	1	610
White Castle		
Hamburger	1	266
Cheeseburger	1	361
Fish sandwich without tartar sauce	1	201
Chicken sandwich	1	497
Sausage and egg sandwich	1	698
Sausage sandwich	1	488
Arby's		
Roast beef	1	588
Beef and cheddar	1	**955**
Ham and cheese	1	**1,350**
Chicken breast sandwich	1	**1,082**
Turkey deluxe	1	**1,047**
Potato cakes	1	397

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Food	Portion	Milligrams* of Sodium
Burger King		
Breakfast Croissan'wich		
Cheese	1	607
Bacon	1	719
Sausage	1	**985**
Ham	1	**962**
Scrambled egg platter		
Egg, croissant, hash browns	1	**893**
Egg, with sausage	1	**1,271**
Egg, with bacon	1	**1,043**
French toast sticks	1	537
Great Danish	1	288
Bagel sandwich		
Egg and cheese	1	**759**
Egg and bacon	1	**872**
Egg and sausage	1	**1,137**
Egg and ham	1	**1,114**
Milk, 2%	8 oz.	122

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Food	Portion	Milligrams* of Sodium
Burger King, cont.		
Milk, whole	8 oz.	119
Whopper	1	**865**
Whopper with cheese	1	**1,177**
Bacon Double Cheeseburger	1	**748**
Mushroom Swiss Double Burger	1	**795**
Hamburger	1	505
Cheeseburger	1	661
Cheeseburger Deluxe	1	652
Hamburger Deluxe	1	496
Chicken Broiler Sandwich	1	**746**
Chicken Tenders	1	54
Chef Salad	1	568
Chicken Chunky Salad	1	443
Thousand Island dressing	2 oz.	403
French dressing	2 oz.	400
Ranch dressing	2 oz.	316
Olive oil and vinegar	2 oz.	214
Reduced-calorie Italian dressing	2 oz.	**762**

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Notes

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