

HEART FAILURE: Following a Low Sodium Diet



- Have no more than 2,000 mg of sodium each day from food and drink or as prescribed by your doctor.
- It is good to select foods with no more than 140 mg of sodium per serving. Foods with more than 300 mg of sodium per serving may not fit into a reduced-sodium meal plan.
- Do not add salt to your food during cooking or at the table.
- Season without salt – use fresh or dried herbs, spices, commercial spice blends (such as Mrs. Dash® salt free seasoning) or lemon juice to season foods.
- Read food labels carefully – Ingredients to avoid include salt, sodium, sodium chloride, monosodium glutamate (MSG), brine, broth, corned, pickled, and smoked.
- When purchasing convenient foods, buy low sodium varieties. Choose frozen dinners with less than 300 mg per serving.
- Many nonprescription medications contain sodium. Make sure you read the labels or ask your pharmacist about the sodium content.
- You will get used to eating in a lower sodium way. It may take many weeks, so keep working hard at changing your eating habits.
- Salt substitutes may be used if permitted by your doctor.

When dining out:

- Ask that you order be prepared without added salt or MSG (mono-sodium glutamate).
- Order baked, broiled, grilled, or steamed foods without sauces, butter, breading, and gravies.
- Use salad dressings sparingly, as most are high in salt.
- Avoid soups, broths, salted crackers or rolls, pickles, cheese, olives, seasoned croutons, and cured meats.
- The heart symbol found on the menu at some restaurants may mean the item is low fat and/or cholesterol. These items may often be higher in sodium. When choosing a low-fat, low-cholesterol meal in a restaurant, ask that it is served with as little salt content as possible.

Some helpful definitions are the following:

- Sodium Free: Less than 5 mg per serving
- Very low sodium: 35 mg per serving
- Low sodium: 140 mg per serving
- Reduced sodium: Sodium content is 25% less than the standard product
- Unsalted: No salt added

Reading food labels

Food labels will tell you how much sodium is in the food you eat. These labels are found on all food products except fresh fruits and vegetables. The labels also tell about serving size, fat, cholesterol, carbohydrates, sugar, protein, and calories per serving. Serving Size is the top information line on the label, right under “Nutrition Facts.” Right below Serving Size, the label shows how many servings are in the package. It is important to multiply the numbers on the label (sodium, fat, calories) by the number of servings you actually eat. For instance, on this label for Macaroni and Cheese, the Serving Size is 4 ounces or 1/3 of the box, and there are 3 servings (or 12 ounces) in the package. If you eat the whole package, that is 3 servings. So if you eat 4 ounces or 1/3 of the box, you are getting 940 mg of sodium. If you eat the whole package, that’s 2,820 mg (940 x 3 = 2,820). If you are limiting your sodium to only 2,000 mg per day, that 940 mg for 1/3 of the box is almost half of what you are allowed for the whole day.

So there is a lot of sodium in this package.

1. Read the serving size and number of servings in the container of food.
2. If you are trying to lose weight, notice the number of calories per serving of food.
3. Read the amount of fat, cholesterol, and sodium in each serving of the food

Nutrition Facts	
Serving Size: 4 oz (1/3 box) (112g)	
Amount Per Serving	
Calories	360
Calories from Fat	110
% Daily Value*	
Total Fat	12 g
Saturated Fat	4 g
Trans Fat	0 g
Cholesterol	20 mg
Sodium	940 mg
Potassium	
Total Carbohydrate	49 g
Dietary Fiber	2 g
Sugars	4 g
Sugar Alcohols	
Protein	13 g
Vitamin A	200 IU
Vitamin C	0 mg
Calcium	200 mg
Iron	1.8 mg

Recommended Foods

Bread/Cereal/Rice/Pasta

- Breads/rolls without salted tops; muffins
- Most ready-to-eat and cooked cereal
- Unsalted crackers and breadsticks
- Low-sodium or homemade breadcrumbs and stuffing

Vegetables

- Most fresh, frozen and low-sodium canned vegetables
- Low-sodium and salt-free vegetable juices



Fruits

- Most fresh, frozen and canned fruits
- All fruit juices

Milk/Yogurt/Cheese

- All milk, but limit to a total of two cups per day
- All yogurts
- Most low-sodium cheeses including low sodium ricotta, low-sodium cream cheese and low-sodium cottage cheese

Meats/Poultry/Fish/Dry Beans and Peas/Eggs/Nuts

- Any fresh or frozen beef, lamb, pork, poultry, fish and some shellfish
- Eggs and egg substitutes
- Low-sodium peanut butter
- Dry peas and beans

Fats/Snacks/Sweets/Condiments/Beverages

- Low-sodium or unsalted versions of butter, margarine, salad dressing, soups, soy sauce,

Condiments and snack foods

- Pepper, herbs and spices; vinegar, lemon or lime juice
- Low-sodium carbonated drinks

Foods to Avoid

Bread/Cereal/Rice/Pasta

- Breads, rolls, crackers with salted tops
- Quick breads, self-rising flour, biscuit mixes, regular bread crumbs
- Instant hot cereals
- Commercially made rice, pasta or stuffing mixes

Vegetables

- Regular canned vegetables/juices, including sauerkraut
- Frozen vegetables with sauces
- Commercially made potato and vegetable mixes

Fruits

- All fruits processed with salt or sodium

Milk/Yogurt/Cheese

- Buttermilk—limit to one cup per week
- Malted and chocolate milk
- Regular and processed cheese, cheese spreads and sauces and cottage cheese

Meats/Poultry/Fish/Dry Beans and Peas/Eggs/Nuts

- Any smoked, cured, salted or canned meat, fish or poultry including bacon, chipped beef, cold cuts, ham, frankfurters, sausage, sardines and anchovies; frozen breaded meats and frozen dinners



- Salted nuts

Fats/Snacks/Sweets/Condiments/Beverages

- Salad dressing/canned soups/gravies/sauces made from instant mixes or other high sodium ingredients
- Salted snack foods; olives; bouillon
- Meat tenderizers/seasoning salt/most flavored vinegars/soy sauce/steak and barbecue sauce/condiments like mustard, ketchup, relish
- Commercially softened water