



HEART FAILURE: Healthy Eating Recommendations



UnityPoint Health



Eating a heart healthy diet can help manage your heart failure and its symptoms.
A heart healthy diet includes:

- 1 Eat a variety of fresh or frozen fruits and veggies at every meal.
 - If choosing canned fruits, look for 100% juice and no added sugars.
 - If choosing canned vegetables, look for low sodium or no added salt.
- 2 Choose whole grains (e.g., whole grain wheat bread instead of white bread; brown rice instead of white rice).
- 3 Select healthy proteins like fish, lean chicken, turkey, or plant-based proteins like beans, lentils, or tofu.
- 4 Use healthy, unsaturated fats like olive or canola oil instead of butter.
- 5 Limit sodium and added sugars.
- 6 A daily sodium intake of 2,000 - 3,000 mg is recommended, unless your healthcare team recommends a different amount. Read food labels for sodium and added sugar amounts.

The following pages of this booklet give examples of lower sodium food options to choose from as well as foods to limit.

Sodium and Food Labels

Label claim	Definition
Sodium Free	Less than 5 milligrams sodium
Very Low Sodium	35 milligrams or less sodium
Low Sodium	140 milligrams or less sodium

Sodium free, very low sodium and **low sodium foods** can be eaten in normal amounts on a low sodium diet. Reduced sodium products may still be high in sodium. Read the label carefully noting serving size and sodium content for the serving size that will be eaten.

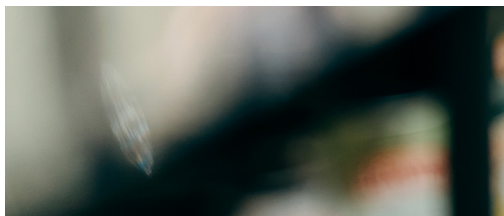
Reduced / less sodium is at least 25% less sodium per serving than an appropriate reference food. Reduced sodium foods may still be too high in sodium to be used on a low sodium diet.

Unsalted / No added salt is processed without the normally used amount of salt.

Serving Size

Sodium per Serving

Nutrition Facts	
8 servings per container	
Serving size	2/3 cup (55g)
Amount per serving	
Calories	230
% Daily Value*	
Total Fat 8g	10%
Saturated Fat 1g	5%
Trans Fat 0g	
Cholesterol 0mg	0%
Sodium 160mg	7%
Total Carbohydrate 37g	13%
Dietary Fiber 4g	14%
Total Sugars 12g	
Includes 10g Added Sugars	20%
Protein 3g	
Vitamin D 2mcg	10%
Calcium 260mg	20%
Iron 8mg	45%
Potassium 235mg	6%
* The % Daily Value (DV) tells you how much a nutrient in a serving of food contributes to a daily diet. 2,000 calories a day is used for general nutrition advice.	



Meat, Poultry, Fish, Eggs, Nuts, Dry Beans

Lower Sodium Options

Any fresh or frozen fish, poultry*, beef, lamb or pork

Eggs

Low sodium, sodium free or very low sodium peanut butter (140 mg or less)

Unsalted or lightly salted nuts

Dried peas, beans, no added sodium
canned beans

Low sodium (140 mg or less) tuna or no added salt sardines

Tofu or low sodium soy products

Frozen or convenience entrees with less than 700mg sodium

Foods to Limit

Any smoked, cured, salted, koshered, canned meat, stew or hash

Bacon

Sausage, chipped beef, cold cuts/lunch meat, ham, hot dogs or brats

Frozen breaded meat, poultry or fish

Any salted nuts

Regular tuna or salmon canned in oil or water

Anchovies, sardines or other canned fish

*Be cautious of sodium injected poultry and meat





Breads

Lower Sodium Options

Regular yeast bread or rolls, bagels, low sodium crackers or breadsticks (140mg per slice of bread)

English muffins

Low sodium (140 mg or less) or homemade breadcrumbs or bread dressing

Low sodium (140 mg or less) tortillas (usually corn)

Foods to Limit

Breads, rolls, bagels or crackers with salted tops

Quick breads, commercial bread dressing

Biscuit, pancake, waffle or muffin mixes

Self-rising flour

Flour tortillas

Limit to 4 - 5 servings per day from this group

Cereals and Grains

Lower Sodium Options

Low sodium (140 mg or less) cooked cereal without added salt, such as plain oatmeal or grits

Low sodium (140 mg or less) dry cereals like Puffed or Shredded Wheat, Puffed Rice, Frosted Mini Wheats

Pasta, rice, barley, quinoa and other grains cooked without salt

Foods to Limit

Most flavored instant hot cereals

Hot or cold cereals with more than 300 mg sodium per serving

Commercial pasta, rice and grain mixes (i.e. Zatarain's, Ramen Noodles, Knorr sides, Lipton Rice, pasta or soup)

Vegetables

Lower Sodium Options

All fresh, frozen or canned vegetables without added salt

No added sodium tomato products

White or sweet potatoes

Foods to Limit

Regular canned vegetables

Vegetables seasoned with ham, bacon or salt pork

Frozen vegetables with sauce or added salt

Sauerkraut, pickled vegetables or others prepared in brine

Commercial potato salad or coleslaw

Fruits and Juices

Lower Sodium Options

All fresh, frozen, canned or dried fruits

All fruit juices

Foods to Limit

None



Cheese and Yogurt

Lower Sodium Options

Ricotta, mozzarella, fontina, gruyere, Jarlsberg, regular swiss, cream cheese, Neufchatel, dry-curd cottage cheese, or any low sodium (140 mg or less) cheese

Limit cheese to 1-2 ounces per day (1 oz = 4 playing dice)

Regular, low fat, Greek or soy yogurt

Foods to Limit

All processed cheese and cheese spread (Kraft American cheese)

Most regular cheeses other than those allowed, especially feta, blue, provolone, parmesan and Romano (250 - 400mg sodium per oz)

Cottage cheese (½ cup has 400 - 500mg sodium)



Soups

Lower Sodium Options

Homemade soup with low sodium broth/stock, veggies and meat without added salt

Low sodium commercially canned or dehydrated soups (less than 140 mg per serving or, if a main meal, less than 700 mg)

Foods to Limit

All regular or reduced sodium canned, frozen or dehydrated soups, broth or bouillon

Beverages

Lower Sodium Options

Water and sparkling water

Milk or soy milk

Homemade buttermilk*

Coffee or tea

Fruit juices, fruit drinks and powdered drink mixes

Sodium free or low sodium (140 mg or less) tomato or vegetable juices

Beverages to Limit

Commercial cultured buttermilk

Commercial instant cocoa mixes, malted mix, milkshakes, other milk-based drink mixes

Regular tomato or vegetable juice, including V8

Sports drinks / electrolyte drinks (Gatorade) or rehydration solutions (such as Liquid IV)

*Add 1 Tbsp lemon juice or vinegar to 1 cup milk to make buttermilk for cooking

Packaged Snack Foods

Lower Sodium Options

Unsalted potato chips, nuts, tortilla chips, rice cakes, pretzels, popcorn, or crackers

Trail mix (140 mg sodium or less) per serving

Low sodium (140 mg or less) crackers

Homemade salsa without added salt or very low sodium (35 mg or less) commercial salsa

Fruit roll-ups

Low sodium granola bars (140 mg or less)

Foods to Limit

Salted chips, nuts, pretzels, crackers or other salty snacks

Regular pre-popped or microwave popcorn

Snack dips made with instant soup mixes or processed cheese

Commercially prepared salsa



Sugar, Sweets and Desserts

Lower Sodium Options

Sherbet, sorbet, ice cream

Hard candy

Homemade pudding

Low sodium (140 mg or less) cakes or cookies

Homemade pies without salt - limit to 1 serving per day

Sugar, jam or jelly, honey, syrup or molasses

Foods to Limit

Most commercial pies, sweet rolls and bakery goods

Instant pudding mix

Avoid adding salt to home baked desserts

Fats

Lower Sodium Options

Unsalted butter or margarine

Most oils including olive oil, canola oil, vegetable oil, avocado oil

Cream, sour cream, unsalted gravy

Low sodium (140 mg or less) salad dressing or mayonnaise - limit to one serving

Sodium free or very low sodium (35 mg or less) salad dressings - no limit.

Foods to Limit

Salt pork, bacon drippings, salted gravy

Salad dressings which contain more than 140mg sodium per serving

Try olive oil and lemon, or balsamic vinegar for a great salt free dressing.

Spices, Herbs, Condiments, Misc.

Lower Sodium Options

Spices, herbs, and Sodium free seasoning blends (like Dash or McCormick salt-free blends)

Prepared horseradish, hot sauce, or low sodium (140 mg or less) ketchup

Homemade barbeque or chili sauce made with allowed ingredients

Cocoa powder

Regular red or white wine, sherry or beer used in cooking



Foods to Limit

Salt or salt-containing seasonings like celery salt, garlic salt or seasoning salt

Sea salt (regular and low sodium)*, kosher salt*, meat tenderizer or monosodium glutamate (MSG)

Herb mixtures with added salt like lemon pepper

Be aware that many condiments and salad dressings can add a significant amount of sodium to your meal. Check the Nutrition Facts label before using them, and if high in sodium, use sparingly or choose something else with a lower sodium content.

Regular or reduced sodium soy sauce (700 - 900 mg per Tbsp)

Steak sauce, Worcestershire sauce, barbeque, teriyaki, chili sauce or other regular sauces containing salt

Olives

Cooking wine

***Most sea salts, kosher salts, and Himalayan salts contain about the same amount of sodium as table salt per teaspoon. These are not low sodium alternatives.**

Tips for Seasoning without Salt

- 1 To obtain a delicate flavor, spices should be used sparingly and to taste.
- 2 Add lemon juice or vinegar only after vegetables are cooked, as cooking time and color may be affected.
- 3 Rub herbs or spices on the surface of meats or add them to flour before browning meat.

Food	Suggested Seasonings
Beans	Basil, dill, lemon juice, marjoram, mint, mustard seed, oregano, sage, savory, tarragon, thyme
Broccoli	Dill, lemon butter, mustard seed, oregano, red pepper
Cabbage	Caraway seed, dill, mint, mustard seed or dry mustard, nutmeg, pepper seed, thyme, vinegar
Carrots	Allspice, caraway seed, chives, cloves, dill, ginger, green pepper, marjoram, mint, nutmeg, thyme
Cauliflower	Caraway seed, chives, dill, lemon juice, nutmeg, parsley, rosemary, tarragon
Corn	Curry, green or red pepper
Peas	Basil, dill, marjoram, mint, oregano, lemon butter, parsley, green pepper, onion, oregano, parsley, thyme
Squash	Allspice, cinnamon, cloves, ginger, dry mustard, nutmeg, onion, rosemary
Tomatoes	Allspice, balsamic vinegar, basil, bay leaf, curry, marjoram, onion, oregano, sage, wine
Beef	Allspice, bay leaf, beer, caraway seed, garlic, marjoram, dry mustard, onion, pepper, green pepper, thyme, wine
Pork	Apple, beer, caraway seed, cloves, dry mustard, garlic, onion, oregano, sage, savory, thyme
Poultry	Curry, garlic, dry mustard, onion, pepper, paprika, poultry seasoning, rosemary, sage, tarragon, wine
Fish	Bay leaf, curry, dill, garlic, lemon, marjoram, onion, parsley, black, green or red pepper, tomatoes, wine
Eggs	Basil, curry, dry mustard, hot sauce, onion, oregano, parsley, pepper, thyme, tomato

Tips for Dining Out

- 1 Restaurant food can be very high in sodium, use caution when dining outside of your home. The best option is to ask for nutrition information.
- 2 Many restaurants provide nutrition facts on their menus or websites. Going online before dining out can help assist you with choosing the best options.

- **The menu may have “healthy” designations such as symbols, or key words in the names of some items (light, fresh, fit, vegetarian, skinny or a heart symbol) which indicate they could be a better choice.**
- **Avoid ordering before-the-meal “extras” like appetizers or bread and butter because these are often sources of extra fat, sodium and calories.**
- **Choose dishes with fresh vegetables.** Ask if the vegetables are fresh, not canned or with added salt. For example, choose a pasta dish with ingredients like fresh tomatoes, spinach and mushrooms rather than a canned tomato sauce.
- **Stick to entrees that can be baked, broiled or sautéed without salt rather than mixed casserole dishes that are pre-prepared.**
- **Limit or avoid extras** like pickles and olives, as both contain a lot of sodium.
- **Ask for sauces, gravies, salad dressings, ketchup and mustard to be served on the side and use them sparingly.**
- **Don’t be afraid to ask that no salt be added to your food.** This may be easier in locally owned restaurants where the food is cooked fresh. There may be sodium-containing seasonings added to items such as grilled chicken without being mentioned on the menu.
- **Choose the salad bar but be selective.** Choose fresh greens, raw vegetables, fresh fruits, and eggs served in their natural state. Avoid high-sodium foods including croutons, olives, shredded cheese, bacon bits, pasta salads, potato salad, coleslaw, sunflower seeds and pickles. Choose oil and vinegar, lemon and flavored vinegars such as balsamic and raspberry. Avoid regular dressings unless you order it on the side and use sparingly by dipping your fork in them before taking a bite.
- **Don’t use the salt-shaker.**
- **Ask whether healthy substitutes are possible.** For example, if a dish comes with French fries or onion rings, ask if you could get a baked potato or fresh vegetables instead. Instead of coleslaw, ask if you can get a small salad, fruit cup or vegetable. Although some substitutes may cost a little extra, the health benefits are worth it!
- **Watch portion sizes.** Often restaurant meals are over the standard serving size. Share a meal with a family member or friend or ask for a box at the start of the meal and save ½ of it for later.

Notes

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For more information

The following web sites contain recipes and other healthy eating tips:

American Heart Association recipes: <https://recipes.heart.org/en/>

National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute: <https://healthyeating.nhlbi.nih.gov>