



Understanding Heart Failure



Welcome

We are pleased that you and your physician have chosen Scripps for your heart care needs. At Scripps, we are committed to providing you with the highest-quality professional care. We believe that by providing you with tools and education about your condition, we can help you manage your heart failure while you are at home.

In this booklet, you will find information about how your heart works, what heart failure is and how to stay healthy.

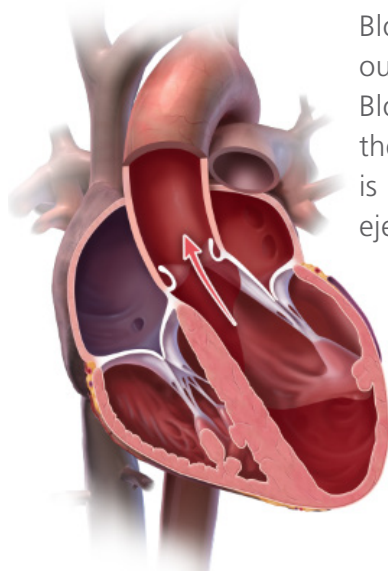


Understanding Heart Failure

In order for you to clearly understand what happens during heart failure, it helps to understand how the heart works normally.

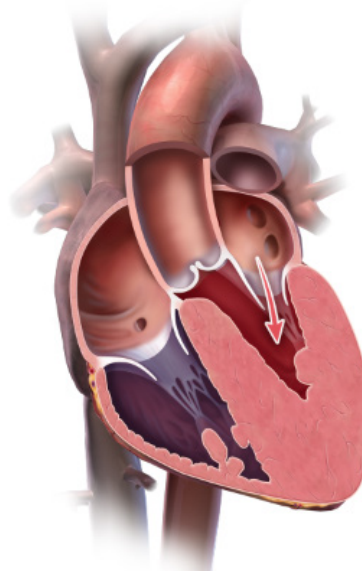
How a Healthy Heart Pumps Blood

As the heart beats, blood constantly moves through it. The heart muscle must pump out (eject) enough of this blood to keep the body healthy. Oxygen-poor blood goes through the right side of the heart from the body to the lungs to gather oxygen. Oxygen-rich blood goes through the left side of the heart carrying oxygen to all other parts of the body.



Blood is pumped out of the ventricles. Blood leaving the left ventricle is measured as ejection fraction.

Heart muscle contracts (squeezes).



Blood fills the ventricles.

Blood fills the ventricles.

What is Heart Failure?

When you have heart failure, your heart is not pumping well enough to meet your body's needs because of damaged heart muscle. When conditions or diseases have weakened the heart muscle, some parts of the body may not get enough blood and oxygen.

This may lead to some of the following symptoms:

- Shortness of breath, wheezing, or coughing with activity.
- Feeling weak or tired after little effort.
- Difficulty breathing when lying flat, or the need to sleep in a recliner or propped up on pillows
- Waking up at night coughing or short of breath.
- Rapid weight gain.
- Swelling in the hands, abdomen, ankles, or feet.

What Causes Heart Failure?

Understanding the cause of your heart failure may help with management of your condition. Some common causes of heart failure include:

- Coronary artery disease
- Heart attack
- High blood pressure
- Heart valve disease
- Infection of the heart muscle
- Alcohol abuse
- Side effects of toxic drugs or medications
- Inherited heart problem

What Happens in Heart Failure?

The heart is a muscle that pumps oxygen-rich blood to all parts of the body. When the heart becomes damaged from a disease or condition, or changes shape over time, it becomes unable to pump as well as it should. When the heart does not pump well, it can cause you to feel heart failure symptoms.

Why Are You Having Symptoms?

Generally when you begin to notice symptoms, the following is taking place:

- The heart muscle is made weaker by one of several diseases or conditions that damage the heart, or the heart has started to change shape.
- Because the heart has changed, the heart's pumping action becomes less efficient.

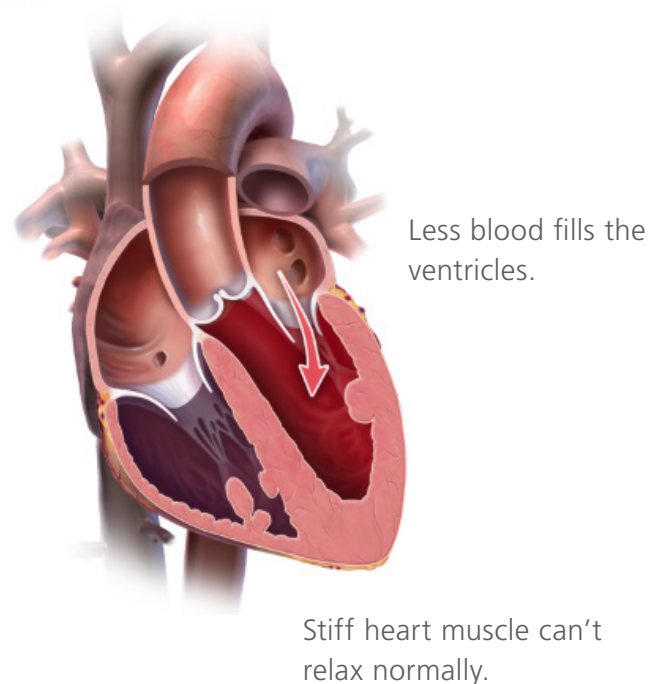
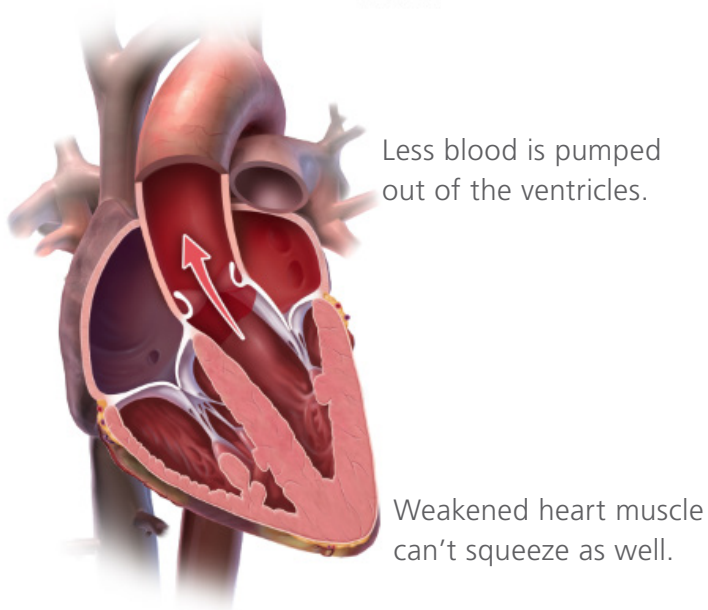
The body tries to compensate for beating faster and enlarging or beating with greater force and increasing pressure. As the heart chambers change the heart muscle develops a poor squeeze or poor relaxation.

Poor Squeeze vs. Poor Relaxation

As you've learned, heart failure generally results from your heart not pumping efficiently. This can be thought of as "poor squeeze," or heart failure with low ejection fraction.

A second type of heart failure is when the heart is pumping well but with stiffened muscle walls—this prevents the heart from relaxing and allowing itself to fill with enough blood between each beat. This "poor relaxation" is known as heart failure with preserved ejection fraction.

Both "poor squeeze" and "poor relaxation" prevent your heart from delivering adequate blood supply to the rest of the body, affecting other vital organs and causing numerous symptoms from head to toe.





Ejection fraction (EF) measures how much blood the heart pumps out (ejects). This is measured to help diagnose heart failure. A healthy heart pumps at least half of the blood from the ventricles with each beat. This means a normal EF is around 50 percent or greater.

Normal: 55 – 65 percent

Low: 40 – 50 percent

At Risk: Less than 35 percent

Studies have shown that cardiac devices have a role in protecting patients who have an EF less than 35 percent.

Which Heart Failure Zone are You in Today?

Every Day

Every Day:

- Weigh yourself in the morning after you urinate and before you eat or drink anything. Use the same scale and wear the same amount of clothing. Write down your weight daily in a calendar.
- Take your medicine as prescribed.
- Check for swelling in your feet, ankles, legs and stomach.
- Eat food low in salt. The recommended daily intake is usually 2,000 mg of sodium or LESS.
- Balance activity and rest periods.

Green Zone

All Clear – This zone is your goal. Your symptoms are under control.

You have:

- No increase in shortness of breath.
- No weight gain more than two pounds in a day or five pounds in a week.
- No swelling of your feet, ankles, legs or stomach.
- No chest pain.

Yellow Zone

Yellow Zone – Call your doctor if:

- You gained more than two pounds today.
- You gained more than five pounds this week.
- You are more short of breath than usual.
- You have increased swelling of your feet, ankles, legs or stomach.
- You are feeling more tired or have less energy.
- You have a dry, hacky cough.
- You feel uneasy; you know something is not right.
- You need to sleep sitting in a chair or it is harder for you to breathe when lying down.

Red Zone

Emergency– Go to the emergency room or call 911 if:

- You are struggling to breathe or have unrelieved shortness of breath while sitting still.
- You have chest pain.
- You are confused or have trouble thinking clearly.
- You feel persistent palpitations.
- You feel lightheaded.
- You have passed out.

The W.A.T.C.H. Plan for Success

Heart failure is a progressive and chronic condition that will affect many facets of your life and has no immediate cure. The good news, however, is that heart failure is only as limiting as you allow it to be. You can directly impact your own quality of life by following your specific treatment plan as closely as possible. Paying attention to your body on a daily basis and being proactive when symptoms arise will be as important as taking all of your medications.

To avoid worsening heart failure, work together with your health care providers to W.A.T.C.H. yourself by following the steps below:

- **W**eigh yourself daily
- **A**ctivity plan/routine
- **T**ake prescribed medications
- **C**all provider for symptoms
- **H**ealthy diet

By following the W.A.T.C.H. plan every day as described in the following pages, you will be able to work with your health care providers to help prevent heart failure symptoms — keeping you healthy and out of the hospital.



Weigh yourself daily

Activity plan/routine

Take prescribed medications

Call provider for symptoms

Healthy diet

WATCH

Weigh Yourself Daily

Why be worried about weight gain?

As you learned earlier, when heart muscle is damaged, the heart becomes weak and pumping blood becomes more difficult. When the heart is not strong enough to push blood efficiently through the body's arteries and veins, blood and fluids seep into the surrounding tissues.

This accumulation of fluid can occur in the following areas:

- Lungs — causing shortness of breath and/or cough
- Ankles, legs, or hands — causing swelling
- Stomach — causing decreased appetite

Additionally, you may experience lack of sufficient blood flow to:

- Muscles — causing feelings of exhaustion
- Brain — causing confusion

This type of fluid buildup occurs in heart failure, and is not a result of eating fattening foods. In order to identify fluid buildup before it becomes severe, it is crucial to accurately weigh yourself every single day and know your weight trend.

Weighing Yourself

By following these guidelines, you can ensure your daily weighing method is accurate:

- Weigh yourself in the morning after you urinate and before you eat or drink anything.
- Weigh yourself without clothes or with the same amount of clothing every day.
- Always use the same scale with numbers that are easy to read.
- Write down your weight each day.

Call your health care provider if you gain two or more pounds in one day or five or more pounds in one week.



Gaining FLUID weight vs. FAT weight

Gaining FLUID Weight:

- Occurs rapidly
- Is associated with other symptoms of heart failure, such as shortness of breath or difficulty breathing when lying flat (see complete list on pg.3)

Gaining FAT Weight:

- Occurs gradually over time
- Is NOT associated with specific heart failure symptoms

A noticeable increase in weight should be reported to your health care provider. Together you can determine if a change in your treatment plan is necessary.

*If you are **losing** weight:*

A noticeable decrease in weight could be caused by dehydration. This should also be reported to your health care provider to determine if your treatment plan is working for you.



Choose Your Activity

Talk to your health care provider about how to arrange a safe activity plan that meets your needs. Ask about types of exercises or activities you can try and choose the ones that appeal to you.

Walking

Walking is a good way to get oxygen moving through the body and an important part of an activity routine. You can walk indoors or outdoors, such as around the house or at a shopping mall. Use the following schedule to establish your new walking routine:

Week	Days per week	No. of minutes	Times per day
Week 1	6 – 7	4 – 5	4
Week 2	6 – 7	5 – 10	3
Week 3	5 – 6	10 – 15	2
Week 4	5 – 6	15 – 20	1
Week 5	4 – 6	20 – 25	1
Week 6	4 – 6	30 – 35	1
Week 7	4 – 6	35 – 40	1
Week 8	4 – 6	35 – 40	1
Maintenance	4 – 6	45 – 60	1

Water Exercise and Light Household Chores

Swimming, water aerobics and light household chores, such as gardening, are other options that are good for people who are trying to introduce activity into their lives.

Cardiac Rehabilitation

A cardiac rehabilitation program is often beneficial for people with heart failure. Cardiac rehab at Scripps provides supervised exercise programs tailored to your specific needs. Trained professionals help patients work closely with their health care providers to monitor progress and ensure that every goal is being met.

Stay Safe

Stop what you're doing and get medical help if you have any of the following symptoms:

- *Pain, discomfort, burning, tightness, heaviness or pressure in your chest.*
- *Unusual aching in your arm, shoulders, neck, jaw or back.*
- *A racing or skipping heartbeat.*
- *Shortness of breath that's worse than normal or doesn't improve with rest.*
- *Extreme tiredness.*
- *Lightheadedness, dizziness, or nausea.*



WATCH

Take Medications

Know What You're Taking

It is important to know certain details about the medications you are being prescribed so you can take them correctly and safely. Ask your health care provider or pharmacist to help you have a thorough understanding of your medications.

For every medication you take, ask your provider three questions:

1. What is the medication?
2. Why is the medication important?
3. How and when do I need to take it?

Knowing the basic answers to these three questions will make a significant improvement in how well you take care of yourself.

My Medication List

Keep a list of all the medications you take. Use these questions to fully understand each medication. Share this list with any doctor, dentist, pharmacist, or other health care provider you see.

Medication Tips:

- As your health care provider adjusts your medications and dosages to find the ideal combination for you and your heart, **make sure to update your medication list every time to reflect the most recent changes.**
- Keep an updated list of your medications in a convenient place like your wallet or purse.
- **Don't be afraid to ask a pharmacist or friend for help!**

What is the medication?	Why is the medication important?	How do I need to take it?		When do I need to take it?			
		Dose	Route	Morning	Afternoon	Evening	Bedtime
Aspirin (Aspirin EC)	Prevents clots	81 mg	Oral	✓			
Coreg (Carvedilol)	Protects heart	6.25 mg	Oral	✓		✓	

Types of Heart Failure Medications

When you are diagnosed with heart failure, you may be prescribed several different medications. Each type of medication works in its own way to treat heart failure, and your health care provider will make adjustments to find just the right combination for you. The main categories of cardiac medications are listed in the chart below:

Type of Medicine	What the Medicine Does
<input type="checkbox"/> ACE Inhibitor (Angiotensin-Converting Enzyme inhibitor) or <input type="checkbox"/> ARB (Angiotensin II Receptor Blocker) My medicine: _____	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Causes blood vessels to relax which helps reduce strain on the heart.
<input type="checkbox"/> Beta-Blocker My medicine: _____	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Helps keep the heart from beating too fast. • Helps keep the heartbeat regular. • Some help slow the progression of heart failure.
<input type="checkbox"/> Diuretic (also called water pill) My medicine: _____	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Helps the body get rid of extra fluid to reduce swelling. • Lessens how hard the heart has to work. • Makes breathing easier.
<input type="checkbox"/> Aldosterone Antagonist My medicine: _____	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alters hormones that are damaging to the heart, decreasing strain on heart. • Given for advanced heart failure.
<input type="checkbox"/> Digoxin My medicine: _____	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Slows heart rate. • Helps heart pump more blood with each beat to allow more oxygen-rich blood to travel throughout the body.
<input type="checkbox"/> Hydralazine with Nitrate My medicine: _____	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lowers blood pressure and decreases how hard the heart has to work. • Two separate medications typically used together

Side Effects

While side effects are rare in heart medications, it is important to report any of the following symptoms to your provider:

- Low blood pressure
- Dizziness or headache
- Weakness, fatigue
- Shortness of breath
- Nausea, diarrhea, or constipation
- Rash
- Cough
- Swelling in legs or feet

WATCH

Call Provider for Symptoms

Identifying Your Baseline and Watching for Changes

The first step to managing heart failure symptoms is getting to know what's normal for you. Paying attention to your body on a daily basis and being proactive when symptoms arise will be as important as taking all of your medications.

My Normal

How much do you weigh today?

(e.g., "My weight was 168 pounds this morning.")

How many pillows do you sleep on at night?

(e.g., "I sleep on my side with one pillow.")

Do your socks and shoes fit comfortably?

(e.g., "I always hook my sandals on the second eyelet" or "When I take off my socks there are no indentations on my skin.")

How much can you usually do before shortness of breath is a problem?

(e.g., "I can walk two blocks to the coffee shop" or "I can vacuum the living room and clean the kitchen.")

These normal situations (how your symptoms usually feel) are your baselines. Knowing what's normal for you will help you see when symptoms are getting worse. You'll know because you won't feel normal anymore.



Monitoring Yourself Daily

- Take blood pressure every morning, avoiding activity for at least five minutes prior.
- Measure heart rate every morning, avoiding activity for at least five minutes prior. (Usually measured by blood pressure device.)
- Weigh yourself every morning (see guidelines on page 7.)
- Pay attention to any changes in your body or activity level.
- Record in a journal and write down your weight, blood pressure, heart rate, any symptoms or changes, and your heart failure "zone" for that day (see page 5).
- Notify your health care provider if any readings or symptoms differ greatly from normal.

Watch for Changes

Once you've seen what your baselines are, watch closely for changes every day. The following are examples of symptoms you would want to report to your health care provider.

How much do you weigh today?

- "Wow, I've gained three pounds since yesterday." Or "I've gained six pounds from this time last week."

How many pillows do you sleep on at night?

- "I had to use two extra pillows last night so I could breathe comfortably while sleeping."

Do your socks and shoes fit comfortably?

- "My socks have left an indentation in my legs that isn't usually there" or "My shoes are difficult to fasten and felt tight today."

How much can you usually do before shortness of breath is a problem?

- "I only made it halfway to the coffee shop before I had to sit down and rest." Or "I wasn't able to finish vacuuming like I usually do because I couldn't breathe."

Keep a Daily Symptom Journal

Having a written record of your symptoms every day will make it easy for you to notice gradual or sudden changes from your normal or baseline.

Important data to record daily includes:

- Weight
- Blood pressure
- Heart rate
- Activity for the day
- Shortness of breath
- Tightness when putting on socks or shoes
- Noticeable swelling
- Increased fatigue
- Salt intake
- Heart Failure "Zone"

Bring your symptom journal to appointments so that your provider may determine if your current treatment plan is working well for you.

Signs and Symptoms of Worsening Heart Failure

Rapid Weight Gain

Rapid weight gain means that fluid is backing up in your body. Gaining two or more pounds in one day or five or more in one week, above your normal weight, are signs of worsening heart failure.

Shortness of Breath

Shortness of breath is caused by fluid backing up into the lungs. You may get winded during easy activities. Breathing may be harder when you lie flat, and you may find that you are using extra pillows at night to allow for breathing comfortably.

Swelling (Edema)

Swelling, also known as edema, means that your body is storing extra fluid. This could happen in your hands, abdomen, ankles or feet. Each person's body carries water differently. Learn where you tend to swell.

Fatigue

Fatigue may occur when your body doesn't get enough blood. If you notice that you are not able to perform your usual daily tasks, or if you have excessive daytime sleepiness, notify your provider.

WATCH

Healthy Diet

Starting With a Low-Sodium Diet

Sodium (salt) from food and drinks makes your body store water. This causes swelling and forces your heart to work harder. To help prevent these problems, you will likely have to eat much less sodium than you're used to. You don't have to change your eating habits all at once, but you do have to start today.

Leave Sodium at the Store

Make a shopping list before you go to the store. Avoid impulse buys and start reading food labels.

These tips can help you while you shop:

- In the produce section: Start your shopping here. You'll find a lot of delicious, low-sodium foods in this section. Fresh vegetables and fruits have almost no sodium.
- In the frozen food aisle: Plain frozen vegetables (without sauces) have very little sodium. However, frozen meals are often high in sodium.
- In the snack food section: These foods are often high in sodium. Look for a low-salt version of your favorite snack.
- In the canned and packaged food aisles: Remember, these are often high in sodium. If you buy canned vegetables, look for varieties without added salt.
- At the meat counter: Look for fresh fish, chicken and meat. Avoid anything that's cured, smoked or pre-marinated or seasoned.

Cook Without Sodium

For your taste buds to adjust, you need to decrease the amount of sodium in all of the foods you eat.

These are a few easy first steps to help you while you cook:

- Remove the salt shaker from the table and stove.
- Season with fresh herbs, garlic, onion, lemon or pepper instead. Cookbooks can give you other ideas.
- Don't salt cooking water. When cooking pasta, add a splash of olive oil to the water instead of salt.
- Eat fresh or plain frozen vegetables. These have much less salt than canned vegetables.
- If you choose to eat high-sodium condiments, dip your fork instead of pouring them on foods.

Did you know?

- *Sodium is measured in milligrams or "mg"*
- *One teaspoon of salt = about 2,400 mg of sodium.*
- *The usual recommendation is 2,000 mg of sodium per day or LESS.*
- *One tablespoon of soy sauce has about 1,000 mg of sodium.*
- *The average cheeseburger with condiments has about 1,000 mg of sodium.*



WATCH

Healthy Diet

How to Read Food Labels

Read food labels while you shop, then put high-sodium foods back on the shelves. You can also use the information on food labels to track how much sodium you eat in a day. The food label on the right is from a can of soup. Get a package or can out of your cupboard. How does it compare to this one?

What Do These Claims Really Mean?

These label terms can help you find lower sodium items. Portion control is always important.

Sodium-Free or Salt-Free: Less than five mg of sodium per serving.

Very Low-Sodium: Less than 35 mg of sodium per serving.

Low-Sodium: Less than 140 mg per serving.

Reduced Sodium or Less Sodium: At least 25 percent less sodium than the regular product. (This could still be too much — read the food label)

Light in Sodium: Fifty percent less sodium than the regular product. (This could still be too much — read the label.)

Unsalted or No Salt Added: No salt is added to the product during processing. (The product could still contain sodium — read the food label.)

Healthy and Natural: No nutritional meaning. Don't be fooled into thinking that foods labeled this way must be good for you.

Nutrition Facts

Serving Size 1 cup
Servings per container 2

Amount Per Serving

Calories 90	Calories from fat 20
% Daily Value	
Total Fat 2 g	3%
Saturated Fat 0 g	0%
Trans Fat 0 g	
Cholesterol 10 mg	3%
Sodium 890mg	37%
Total Carbohydrates 13 g	4%
Dietary Fiber 1 g	4%
Sugars 1 g	
Protein 6 g	

Ingredients: Chicken broth, carrots, cooked white chicken meat (white chicken meat, water, salt, sodium phosphate, isolates soy protein, modified cornstarch, cornstarch), potatoes, celery, rice, monosodium glutamate. Contains soy.

The amounts listed are only for a 1/2-cup serving. If you eat two servings, you need to double all the numbers on the label.

One serving (1/2 cup) has 860 mg of sodium. How does this compare to your daily goal?

One serving uses 36 percent of your allowance of sodium for the entire day. **This is very high.**
{Five percent or less is low.}
{Twenty percent or more is high.}

Make sure to check the ingredients list for salt. Also watch for other high-sodium ingredients, including:

- Sodium phosphate
- Brine
- Monosodium glutamate (MSG)
- Baking soda
- Any other ingredient that has “sodium” in its name

WATCH (cont.)

Healthy Diet

Questions About Using Salt-free Seasonings and Salt Substitutes

What is a salt-free seasoning blend?

Typically salt-free seasoning blends contain fresh herbs and spices without added potassium or sodium.

What is a salt substitute?

A sodium-free product that can be used to season food. However, be aware that many salt substitutes contain potassium chloride, which can cause problems with some heart medications. Before trying salt substitute, check with your health care provider or dietitian to make sure it's safe for you.

Can I use garlic salt, onion salt or celery salt?

Garlic, onion and celery salt are not salt substitutes or salt-free seasoning blends. Adobo seasoning also contains a significant amount of sodium. Adding these to your food is still adding salt. It is all right to add garlic and onion powder.

What about using a low-sodium salt or "lite salt?"

Low-sodium salt is available and contains a lower amount of sodium but uses potassium to increase flavor. Using low-sodium salt still adds a significant amount of salt to your diet, so it should still be avoided.

Is sea salt better than table salt?

Sea salt contains a slightly lower amount of sodium than table salt, however, there is still a significant amount. Adding sea salt to food should be avoided.

Will the salt-free seasoning taste like salt? I don't like the flavor of some seasoning blends.

There are many different flavors and types of salt-free and potassium-free seasoning blends. Try different brands and different flavors. The good news is that after a few months of following a low-sodium diet, your taste buds will become more sensitive to the smaller amounts of salt in your food.



Watch Out for Hidden Sodium

Sodium can hide in foods that don't even taste salty. Sodium is often found in the following:

Canned, processed and convenience foods: soups, lunch meat, frozen pizza, frozen dinners, vegetable juice

Pre-packaged sides: pasta, noodle and rice dishes that contain a flavor packet or have flavoring mixed in

Mixes and seasonings: gravy mix, instant mashed potatoes, cake mix, taco seasoning, some spice mixes

Sauces and condiments: ketchup, soy sauce, barbecue sauce

Salted snacks: chips, crackers, popcorn, pickled foods, pretzels, salted nuts

Bubbly liquids: Soda, some over-the-counter medicines (e.g., tablets that fizz in water)

Is it all right to add just a little bit of salt to my food?

Sodium can hide in foods that don't even taste salty. To prevent the start of heart failure symptoms, your goal should be no more than 2,000 mg of sodium (salt) each day. Just one teaspoon of salt contains 2,400 mg of sodium—more than your daily goal. So even small amounts of added salt should be avoided. An unmonitored diet consumes 8,000 to 9,000 mg of sodium a day. The chart below shows how some of the more popular seasonings can help or hurt you when trying to reach your diet goals.

Compare Seasoning Blends, Salt and Salt Substitutes (Goal = 1,500 to 2,000 mg per day)

Type	Sodium per 1/4 teaspoon	Potassium per 1/4 teaspoon
Table Salt	570 mg	0 mg
La Baleine Sea Salt	540 mg	0 mg
Morton Lite Salt	290 mg	350 mg
Also Salt Original	0 mg	356 mg
Lawry's Garlic Salt	240 mg	0 mg
McCormick Onion Salt	450 mg	0 mg
McCormick Celery Salt	290 mg	0 mg
Nu-Salt	0 mg	795 mg
Morton Salt Balance	440 mg	200 mg
Old Bay "30% less sodium"	95 mg	0 mg
Adobo Seasoning	350 mg	0 mg
Mrs. Dash Original	0 mg	10 mg
Spike 5 Herb Magic	0 mg	0 mg
Benson's Table Tasty	0 mg	0 mg
Bell's All Natural Seasoning	0 mg	0 mg
Garlic Powder	0 mg	8 mg
Onion Powder	0 mg	5 mg



WATCH (cont.)

Healthy Diet

Slim Down Your Meals

Just as you're learning to cook with less salt, you can also learn to cook with less fat and cholesterol. Try the following:

- Bake, steam, microwave or broil foods instead of frying.
- Cook with olive oil, canola oil or trans-fat free margarine instead of butter or hard stick margarine.
- Before cooking, trim fat from meat and remove the skin from chicken.
- Chill soups and stews. Skim off the fat before reheating and serving.

- Try using half as much cheese as a recipe calls for, or less. (This will also help you meet your sodium goal).
- Remember that foods marked "low-fat" can be high in sodium. Read food labels carefully, so you can stick to your goal.

Choose Fats Wisely

Your body needs some fats to stay healthy, but eating too much of certain fats is bad for your heart. Try to choose the healthier fats and avoid unhealthy ones.

Type	Choose	Limit	Avoid
Type of fat	Unsaturated fat	Saturated fat	Trans fat
Where it's found	Nuts, seeds, fish, avocados, some vegetable oils (such as olive, canola, and soy)	Animal foods, such as beef, pork, or high-fat dairy	Snack foods, French fries and other fast food, shortening, most margarines
What you should do	Eat unsaturated fat some of the time. For instance, cook with olive or canola oil instead of butter.	Eat as little saturated fat as you can. To cut down, choose fat-free milk and lean meats, chicken or fish.	Avoid foods with trans-fat. Check for it on food labels and on the ingredients list in the form of hydrogenated oils.



Living with Heart Failure

Staying in Control

To manage heart failure, you'll need to make a lot of changes. Coping with a chronic health problem is hard. Sometimes you may feel like you don't have control over your life or your health. Learning how to follow your treatment plan can help you regain some control. Don't be afraid to ask others for help when you need it. These suggestions may help, too:

Join a Support Group

It may be easier to talk to people who know firsthand what you're going through.

Pay Attention to Your Mood

Depression can be treated. Coping with heart failure takes a lot of effort. This can affect how you feel. Some medications can change your mood, too. Having heart failure doesn't mean you have to feel bad all the time, though. Talk to your health care provider or a therapist if you feel down most days, or are having problems with appetite or sleep. These are signs of depression. Treatment can help you feel better. When depression is under control, your overall health may also improve.

If You Can't Become Aroused

When you're dealing with a chronic health problem, it's not unusual to have trouble becoming aroused. Erectile dysfunction is fairly common in men. In many cases, medication can improve sexual function. For women, products such as estrogen cream and lubrication can make sex more comfortable. Talk to your health care provider about your options.

Quitting Smoking

If you smoke, quitting is one of the most important changes you can make. Quitting reduces your chances of heart attack and other health problems. After you quit you may feel better, have more energy, and notice less shortness of breath. Quitting smoking isn't easy, but millions of people have done it. You can, too!

Have a "Quit Plan"

Quitting takes patience and a plan. You'll boost your chances of success by forming a "quit plan" ahead of time. Plan when you'll quit, how you'll deal with urges to smoke, and who you'll ask for support. You may also want to set a quit date (the day you'll put your plan in motion).

For ideas and support information on how to quit smoking, call 1-800-NO-BUTTS.

If You Have Sleep Apnea

If you have sleep apnea, your doctor may prescribe a Continuous Positive Airway Pressure (CPAP) or Bi-level Positive Airway Pressure (BiPAP) device. The machine sends a gentle flow of air through a nasal mask while you sleep. This air goes through your nose and into your lungs, keeping airways open. By improving oxygen your heart function may improve.

Tips for Using CPAP and BiPAP

- If your mask doesn't fit or feel right, talk to your doctor or the manufacturer about adjusting it or trying a new one.
- If you have allergies or other problems that block your nose, get those treated. The devices work best if your nose is clear.
- If the device feels uncomfortable or doesn't work well at first, don't stop using it. Ask your provider for ways to help make it work for you.

W.A.T.C.H.

WATCH

Weigh Yourself Daily

WATCH

Activity Routine

WATCH

Take Medications

WATCH

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Healthy Diet

Next Steps

You have just received a lot of information about your condition, how to take care of yourself and when to talk with your health care provider. Keep this booklet handy and revisit the information anytime you have a question. Here are a few questions to test your knowledge.

- Why is it important to limit the amount of salt in your diet?
- What are three examples of foods that contain high amounts of salt?
- How much salt should you eat per day?
- Can you locate the serving size on the food label?
- Can you locate the amount of sodium on the food label?
- How much sodium per serving is considered “low-sodium”?
- What types of seasonings should be avoided?
- How can you add flavor such as garlic or onion without adding salt to your food?
- How can you season your food?
- What kinds of meats are generally higher in sodium?
- What are three examples of condiments high in sodium?
- How can you lower the amount of sodium in your diet?



For more information about heart care at Scripps,
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