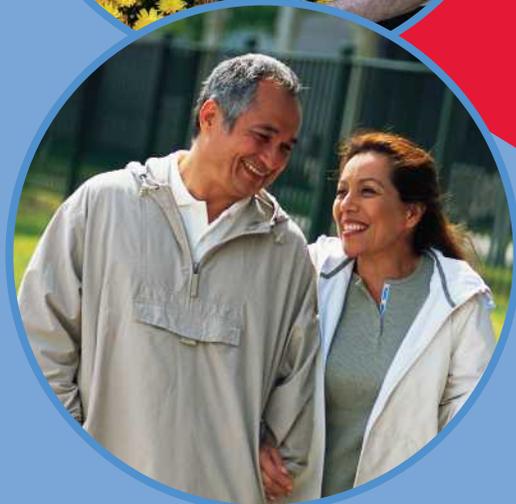




# Caring for Your Heart:

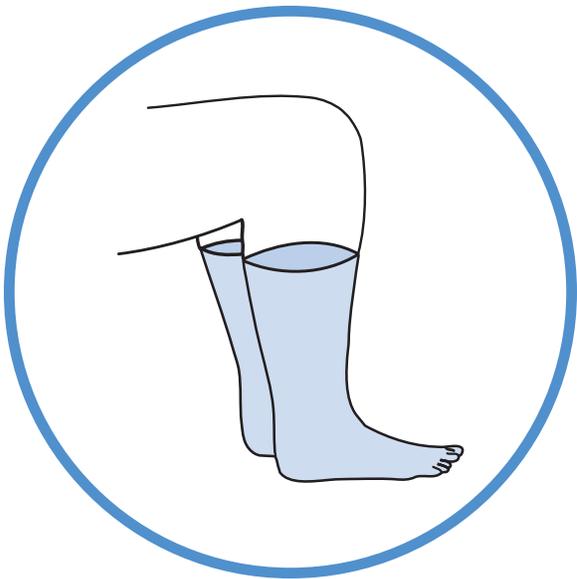
## Living Well with Heart Failure



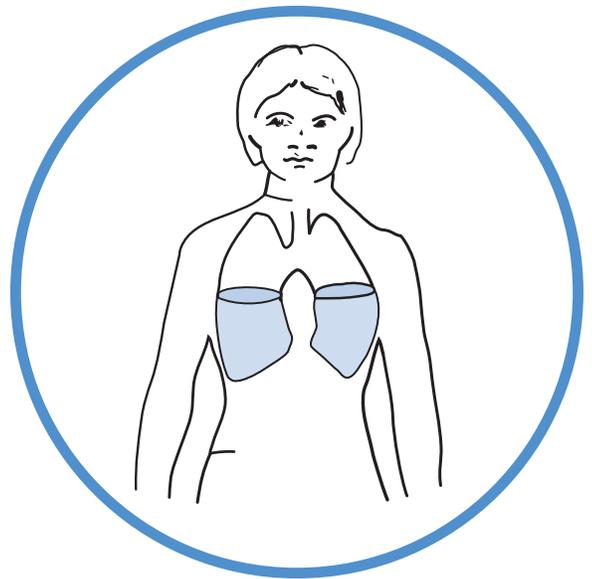
Provided by:  
**Providence Health & Services**

# What is Heart Failure?

- Heart failure means the heart cannot pump the blood well.
- When your heart doesn't pump well, it can make you feel weak, tired, or dizzy.
- Heart failure causes water to leak out of your blood vessels. This water can fill up your lungs and make you short of breath. It can also cause your legs to swell.



Water in legs causes swelling.



Water in lungs can make you short of breath.

# Things You Can Do to Live Well with Heart Failure



Take your medicines (every day) correctly.



Eat less salt.



Exercise regularly.



Check yourself each day.



## How to Take Your Medicines

Heart failure can be controlled with medicine. Taking your medicine right will help your heart pump better and can make you feel better and live longer.

### Take your pills

- Take each of your medicines, every day, at the right times
- Do not skip doses of your medicines, even when you feel good.
- If you think you are having side effects from your medicines, don't stop taking them, talk to your doctor immediately.
- If you are having trouble paying for your medicine, talk to your doctor.





# How to Take Your Medicines

## Don't run out of pills

- Make sure you always have enough medicine left in your pill bottles. Don't let your medicine bottles run out.



- Be aware of how many refills you have on your pill bottles. Every time you pick up your medicines, check the number of refills you have left. If the label says **No Refills or Refills: 0** then call your doctor right away to get more refills.
- Get all of your pills from the same pharmacy every time.



# How to Take Your Medicines

## Have a system

Have a system that helps you remember how and when to take your medicines.

- Keep a list of your medicines with instructions for how many pills to take, and when to take them.
- Keep your medicine bottles in a place that makes it easy to remember to take them. Keeping your medicines next to your toothbrush, at your bedside, or in the kitchen are good ideas.
- Some people use a pill box in which they put their pills for each day of the week.
- If you are going out of the house for a long time, bring enough medicine with you.



## How to Take Your Medicines

### Bring your pills when you go to the doctor

- Bring all of your pill bottles and medicine list to each doctor visit.
- Show your doctor how and when you take your pills. This will help you and your doctor keep you safe and make sure you don't run out of pills.





## How to Take Your Medicines

### Know your “water pill” (diuretic)

Make sure you know which one of your pills is your “water pill”—ask your doctor or pharmacist.

- Your water pill is also called a diuretic. The most common kind is called Lasix which is the same as furosemide.
- Your water pill (or diuretic) controls how much salt and water you have in your body. Taking more of this pill will make you “pee” (urinate) more to get rid of salt and water.
- You and your doctor might change how much of this medicine you take from one day to the next to help keep your body in balance and keep you out of trouble.

My water pill: \_\_\_\_\_



## You Can Do It

Here is a place to write down ideas to help you take your medicines.

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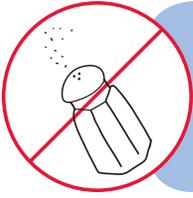
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Remember, taking your medicine right will help your heart pump better, and can make you feel better and live longer.

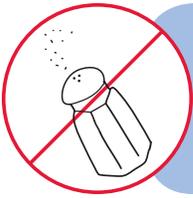


## How to Eat Less Salt

- Salt is also called “sodium” and is found in many foods.
- Most foods you eat have salt even if you can’t see it or taste it.
- Salt acts like a sponge and makes the body hold water.
- Eating too much salt can cause your weight to go up, swelling in your legs, and water in your lungs.

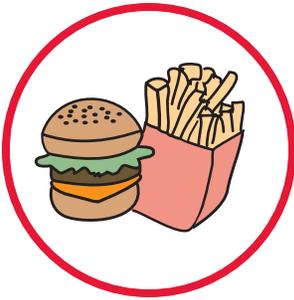
Eating less salt will help you feel better.  
You can eat less salt if you:

- Choose foods that are low in salt.
- Don’t add salt when you cook.
- Take the salt shaker off of the table.

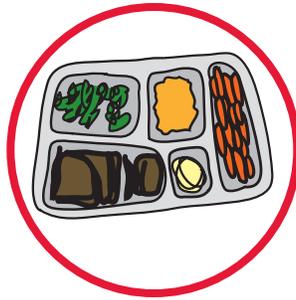


# How to Eat Less Salt

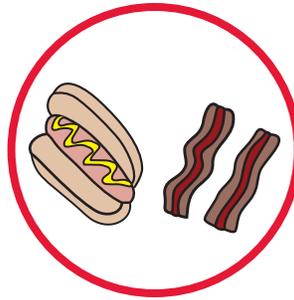
Avoid or limit these high salt foods:



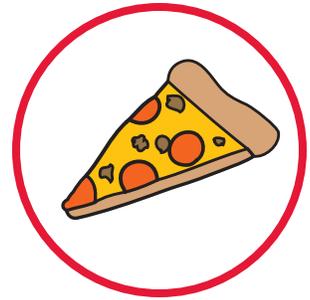
fast food



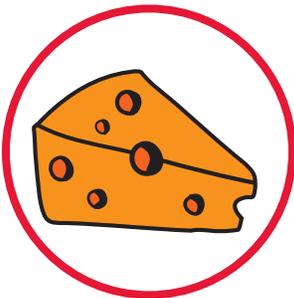
frozen meals



hot dogs, bacon,  
smoked meat



pizza



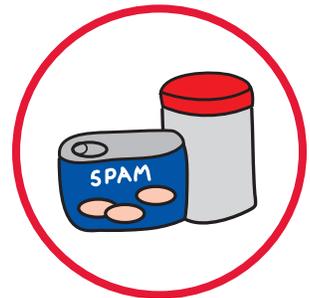
cheese



canned beans  
and vegetables



instant  
hot cereals



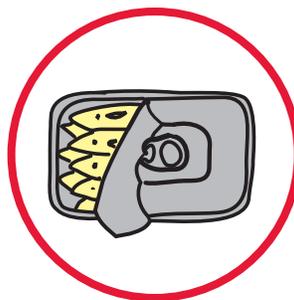
canned or  
potted meat



sauces and  
seasonings



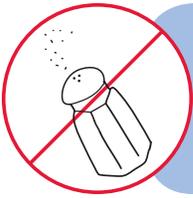
snack foods



canned and  
smoked fish

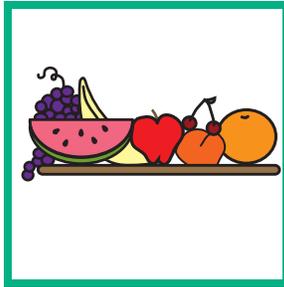


canned soup

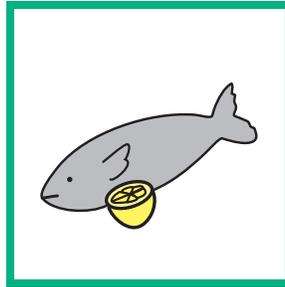


# How to Eat Less Salt

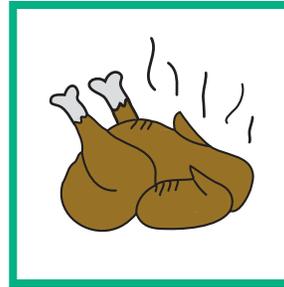
Choose these low salt foods:



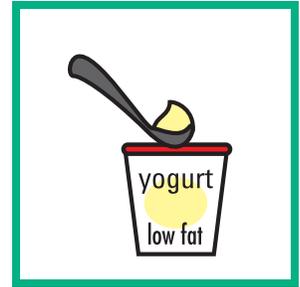
fruit



fresh fish



fresh meats



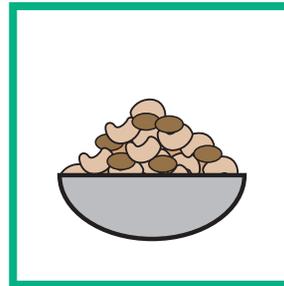
yogurt



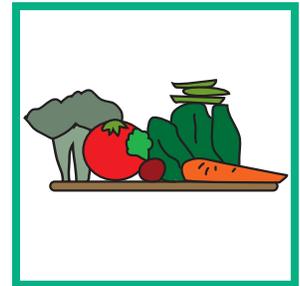
frozen  
vegetables



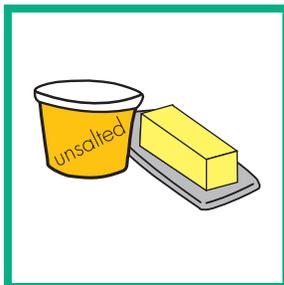
lemon slice, olive  
oil, and vinegar



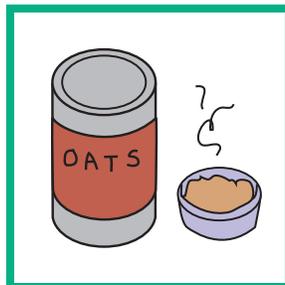
dried beans



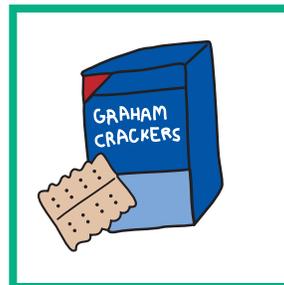
fresh vegetables



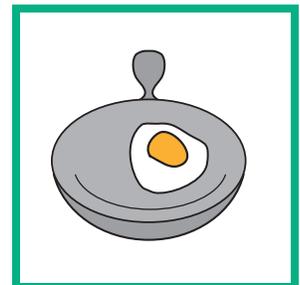
unsalted  
margarine



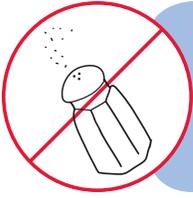
whole oats



graham crackers



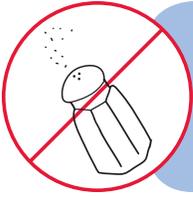
eggs



## More Tips on How to Eat Less Salt

### When you eat out:

- Ask for food cooked with no salt.
- Avoid butter, cheese, or sauces.
- Avoid fried foods—choose grilled, baked, or steamed foods.
- Choose oil and vinegar salad dressing.
- Limit or choose fast food items with less sodium.
- Avoid bacon, sausage, or ham.

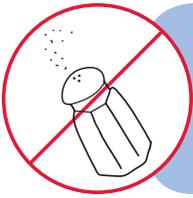


## More Tips on How to Eat Less Salt

### When you eat at home:

- Don't add salt to food when you cook or eat.
- Season foods with herbs and seasonings that do not have salt.
- Make your own or choose low sodium sauces, salad dressings, breads, and desserts.
- Avoid “instant foods” that come in a bag or box.
- Rinse canned foods (even canned fish) before cooking and eating them.

Read food labels and choose foods that have less than 140mg of sodium per serving.



# How to Eat Less Salt

## Reading a Food Label

### Step 1:

Look at the serving size



### Step 2:

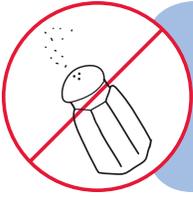
Look at the sodium per serving



Step 3: choose foods with less than 140mg sodium per serving

<b>Nutrition Facts</b>	
Serving Size 1/2 cup (120g)	
Servings Per Container About 3.5	
<b>Amount Per Serving</b>	
<b>Calories</b> 20	Calories from Fat 0
<b>% Daily Value*</b>	
<b>Total Fat</b> 0g	<b>0%</b>
Saturated Fat 0g	<b>0%</b>
Trans Fat 0g	
<b>Cholesterol</b> 0mg	<b>0%</b>
<b>Sodium</b> 30mg	<b>1%</b>
<b>Total Carbohydrate</b> 4g	<b>1%</b>
Dietary Fiber 2g	<b>8%</b>
Sugars 2g	
<b>Protein</b> less than 1g	
Vitamin A 4%	Vitamin C 4%
Calcium 2%	Iron 0%
*Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet.	

- This food has 30mg of sodium in 1/2 cup.
- This food is a good choice!
- Watch how much you eat.



# How to Eat Less Salt

## Reading a food label

Choose items labeled:

Low Sodium

NO SALT ADDED

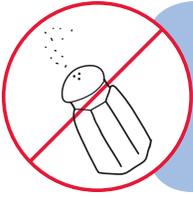
Sodium Free

Watch out for items labeled:

LOWER SODIUM

- This food has 220mg of sodium in ½ cup.
- This food is not a good choice!

Nutrition Facts	
Serving Size 1/2 cup (120g)	
Servings Per Container 3	
Amount Per Serving	
<b>Calories</b> 100	Calories from Fat 0
% Daily Value*	
<b>Total Fat</b> 0g	<b>0%</b>
Saturated Fat 0g	<b>0%</b>
Trans Fat 0g	
<b>Cholesterol</b> 0mg	<b>0%</b>
<b>Sodium</b> 220mg	<b>9%</b>
<b>Total Carbohydrate</b> 18g	<b>6%</b>
Dietary Fiber 4g	<b>16%</b>
Sugars 4g	
<b>Protein</b> 6g	
Vitamin A 0%	• Vitamin C 0%
Calcium 4%	• Iron 8%
*Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet.	



## You Can Do It

Choose or write down 1 or 2 things you will do for the next few weeks.

- I will use a salt-free seasoning for cooking and at meals.
- I will rinse canned foods before cooking and eating them.
- When I eat out, I will ask for my meal with no added salt.
- I will remove one high salt item from my diet this week.
- I will make low sodium sauces and salad dressings.
- I will avoid eating at fast food restaurants.
- I will choose fruit or fresh vegetables for snacks.
- I will \_\_\_\_\_

Remember, small changes in your eating can make a big difference in salt intake. You will find that your taste adjusts over time and you get used to eating less salt.



## Exercising Well with Heart Failure

### What's in it for you?

- Being more active is one of the best things you can do for your heart failure.
- Moving more can help you have more energy and feel more upbeat.

### Start now!

If you are not exercising, start with 10 minutes a day. It can be as simple as walking 5 minutes from your door and turning around and walking back.

### Be Safe

- Start slowly.
- Stop if you feel chest pain, dizziness or have severe shortness of breath.



## Exercising Well with Heart Failure

You can exercise by:

- Using a stationary bicycle.
- Walking in your neighborhood or at the mall.
- Going to an exercise class.
- Sweeping, vacuuming, or dusting.
- Mowing the lawn or working in your garden.
- Walking to the bus.

A lot of people say that walking is the easiest exercise for them. Many people walk with a friend or their pet. Walking is easy, fun and free.

So turn off the TV, get up and get moving!



## Exercise Will Get Easier

Your body needs time to get used to being more active.

You will notice that it will get easier and you will be able to do more.

### Steps for doing more:

- Begin by doing an activity for 10 minutes, three times per week.
- After a couple of weeks, add 5 minutes, so that you are exercising 15 minutes at a time.
- When you feel comfortable doing more, add another 5 minutes.
- You want to work up to 30 minutes of exercise 3 times a week.



## Exercise Will Get Easier

“I enjoy walking  
after dinner  
with my husband.”

“I found an exercise class  
at the Senior center  
that works well for me.”

- Exercise with a friend or partner if possible.
- Wear clothes and shoes that fit well.
- Start slowly. Ease your way into exercise.



## You Can Do It

Pick things YOU like to do. Try one of these suggestions or write down 1 or 2 things you enjoy that make your body move.

- I will take a short walk every day.
- I will take a walk for 10 minutes 3 days a week.
- I will dance for 10 minutes at home 3 days a week.
- I will ride a stationary bike for 10 minutes 3 days a week.
- I will stretch for 10 minutes when I wake up 3 days a week.
- I will do a water exercise for 10 minutes 3 days a week.
- I will \_\_\_\_\_



## Daily Check-Up

Heart failure can cause you to have symptoms or feel bad. If you can catch these symptoms early, you can take action to feel better and stay out of the hospital.

Each day, do a check-up.

- How do you feel?
- Do you have swelling?
- Weigh yourself.

We will explain how to do the daily check-up in the next pages.



## #1—How do I feel today?

You can tell how well your heart is doing by how you feel and what you can do.

### Am I short of breath walking?

Heart failure can make you feel short of breath while walking.



Doing well—walk easily with no shortness of breath



Getting worse—shortness of breath after walking a short distance



Call your doctor—shortness of breath at rest



## #1—How do I feel today?

### Am I short of breath sleeping?

Heart failure can also make you feel short of breath when you are lying down. When it gets really bad, some people find they need to sleep sitting up.



Doing well—  
sleeping flat, no  
shortness of breath



Getting worse—  
needing 2 pillows  
or more to avoid  
shortness of breath



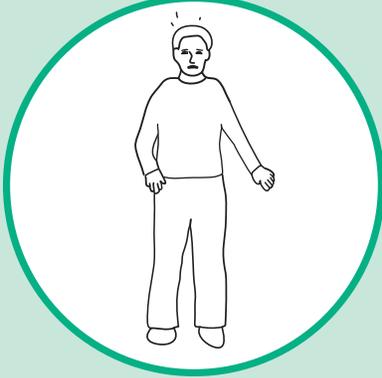
Call your doctor—  
have to sleep upright  
to avoid shortness  
of breath



## #1—How do I feel today?

Am I feeling faint or dizzy?

Sometimes people with heart failure feel very dizzy or lightheaded.



Doing well — Not dizzy or sometimes a little dizzy when standing up



Doing worse — Dizzy for a long time



Call your doctor — Almost passed out, passed out (fainted), or fallen



## #2—Do You Have Swelling?

Swelling in your legs can be a sign that your body is holding onto too much water. This is easy to check.

To check for swelling each morning:

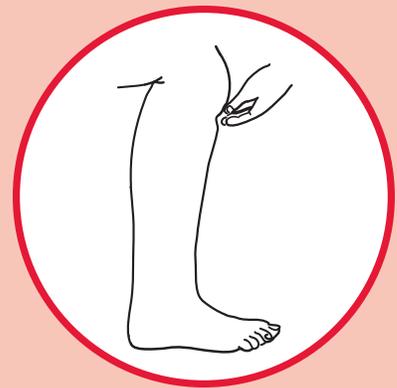
- Press firmly into the skin on the front part of your lower leg.
- If your finger makes a pit in your skin, you have swelling in that part of your leg.
- Be aware of how much swelling is usual for you and look for changes.



Doing well—  
no swelling



Getting worse—  
swelling in ankle or shin



Call your doctor—  
swelling in knee area



## #3 — Weigh Yourself Each Day

Weigh yourself each morning:

- After you “pee” (urinate).
- Before you eat breakfast.
- Before you get dressed.



Know your target weight

- Ask your doctor what your target weight is each time you visit. The target weight is where your heart is working best.
- You and your doctor need a plan for when your weight goes up too much.



## Putting It All Together

The daily check-up helps you know how to take action for your heart failure. By finding problems early, you can feel better and stay out of the hospital.

- Check how you feel.
- Check your swelling in your legs.
- Check your weight.
- Decide if you need to call your doctor or heart failure team.

If you're doing well, keep up the good work!

Take your medicines, watch your salt, and get your exercise today.



## When Should I Call?

Call us if:

Phone \_\_\_\_\_



You are short of breath at rest or more short of breath than usual.



You have to sleep upright or in a chair.



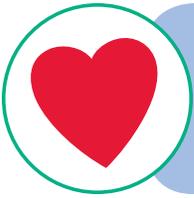
You have more swelling in your legs than usual.



You have a lot of dizziness or light-headedness that is worse than usual.



Your weight goes up by 4 or more pounds from your target weight.



## You Can Do It

Here is a place to write down ideas or questions you have about your daily check-up.

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Remember, your daily check-up helps you know how your heart failure is doing.

## Developed by:

Cecil G. Sheps Center for Health Services Research  
Division of General Internal Medicine  
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

Feinberg School of Medicine  
Northwestern University

University of California San Francisco  
Center for Vulnerable Populations  
San Francisco General Hospital

For questions regarding this educational material please email  
[HFeducationalmaterial@schsr.unc.edu](mailto:HFeducationalmaterial@schsr.unc.edu).