



CONGESTIVE HEART FAILURE


PATIENT INFORMATION

For: _____ From: Dr. _____

If your doctor has diagnosed you with congestive heart failure (CHF), there are some lifestyle changes you can make to help your heart:

1) **Healthy Weight:** Some of the pills your doctor has given you will help reduce the fluid in your body and ease the workload on your heart. To check how well these pills are working, weigh yourself on a daily basis using the same method: same scale, same time, same amount of clothing. Keep a record of what you weigh and report a daily increase of 1 kg (2 lbs) or more to your health-care team. If you do not have a scale and you notice fluid build-up in your ankles or hands, or you get short of breath, report to your doctor immediately.

2) **Salt Reduction:** Too much salt in your food can also cause problems. Foods high in salt can cause your body to hold more water. The pills you take to remove the water from your body will not work as well if your diet is high in salt. Salt is a chemical compound called sodium chloride. The part that causes health problems is the sodium. For people with CHF, it is advised to consume less than 3,000 mg of sodium per day. A total of 5 mL (1 tsp) of table salt contains 2,000 mg of sodium and one dill pickle contains 1,500 mg of sodium. Some other common foods with a high sodium content are listed in the table at left.

Become a label-reader and look for the sodium content on packaged foods. Fast foods, such as Chinese food, submarine sandwiches, and cheeseburgers, are also very high in sodium and should be avoided. 

High-Sodium Foods	
Food Item	Sodium Content
Tomato juice, 250 mL (1 cup)	600 mg
Canned mushrooms, 250 mL (1 cup)	800 mg
Soy sauce, 15 ml (1 tbsp)	1,000 mg
Garlic salt, 5 mL (1 tsp)	1,850 mg
Canned soup, 250 mL (1 cup)	1,000 mg

Notes

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May be copied and distributed to patients