

# Healthy Eating Guide for Heart Failure

## What is Heart Failure?

Heart failure is a chronic condition where your heart does not pump blood efficiently and does not deliver enough oxygen to your body.

Depending on its severity, it can cause you to:

- Feel tired on some exertion
- Have shortness of breath
- Experience fatigue (extreme tiredness even after rest)
- Have bluish coloured fingers and lips
- Be unable to sleep lying flat
- Feel nauseous
- Have loss of appetite
- Have fluid build-up in your lower body, around your stomach or neck

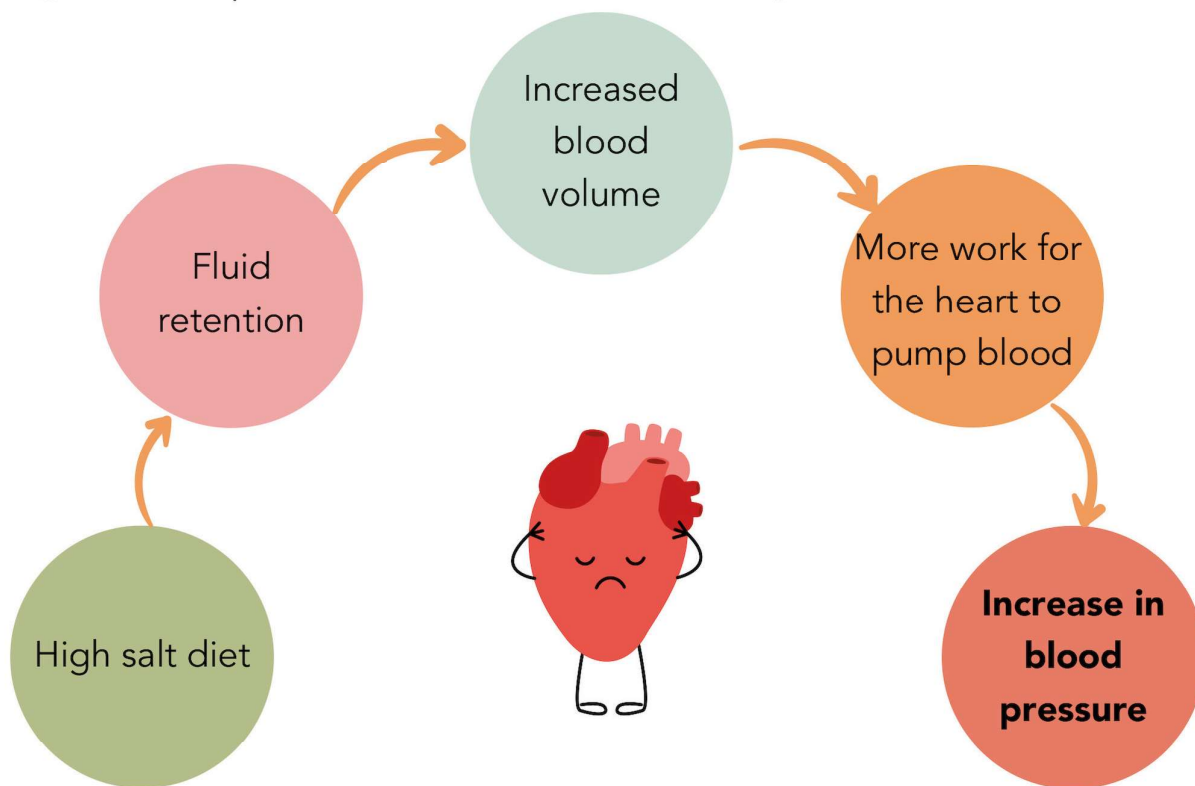


## How can my Diet and Lifestyle help?

Apart from complying to your medications, making dietary and lifestyle changes can also help you manage your heart condition and reduce some of your symptoms. The following pages present some ways to improve your health.

## Reduce Salt (Sodium) Intake

Too much salt in your diet can increase your fluid retention and lead to higher blood pressure. This increases stress on your heart.



Most of the salt we eat is hidden in preservatives used in processed food, and condiments in outside food (when we eat out or buy takeaways).

### Sources of Sodium



You can reduce your sodium intake gradually and allow your taste buds to adapt to a lower sodium diet.

**Aim for no more than 2000 – 2400mg of sodium a day**

That's about 1 teaspoon (5g) of salt!



### Tips to Reduce Sodium Intake

- Tip 1: Be a creative chef
  - Use salt, seasonings and sauces sparingly



- Use herbs and spices to flavor your meal
- Use fresh and natural food as your main ingredients



### Try this marinade recipe to flavour your food!

Blend 2 tablespoons chopped basil, 2 tablespoons thyme and 2 tablespoons grated lemon peel.

Store in a tightly closed jar in the freezer!



- Tip 2: Eat out smartly
  - Cut down on gravy, sauces, dressings and soup



- Choose plain rice over flavored rice, and rice noodles over yellow noodles



- Limit food that are obviously salty such as salted egg, luncheon meat, pickles, fish ball, fish cakes and nuggets



- Tip 3: Shop wisely
  - Look for the healthier choice symbol on the menu and choose food products labelled “Lower in Sodium” and “No Added Sodium”



- Always read the food label. Look out for hidden sodium in words like marinated, cured, pickled, smoked, brined and breaded.



- Check the ingredient list. You should look for lower sodium alternatives if salt is listed in the first five ingredients.



#### INGREDIENTS

Leaf Mustard, Vegetarian Soy Sauce, Sugar, Salt, Monosodium Glutamate, Sodium Metabisulphite

### Do you know?

Sodium can be listed as salt, sea salt, vegetable salt, rock salt, sodium chloride, monosodium glutamate, sodium bicarbonate or stock cubes.

### Can I Use Salt Substitutes to Replace Salt?

Most of the salt substitutes contain potassium. If you are told to limit potassium in your diet, be extra cautious with it. Check with your doctor or dietitian before using salt substitutes.



## Restrict Fluid Intake

Controlling your fluid intake can help you to:

- Minimise fluid retention in the body
- Minimise shortness of breath
- Maintain ideal blood pressure
- Decrease the feeling of bloating or nausea



Check with your medical team regarding your daily fluid target periodically as it may change over time

## How Can I Control My Fluid Intake?

### A. Measure your fluids

- Drink from smaller cups
- Use measuring cups to measure your fluid intake
- Spread out your fluid intake throughout the day
- Try to split the fluid allowance into 2 bottles, one for drinking and one to take with medications
- Fill up a bottle of water and use this to keep track of your fluid intake. If you drink or eat something liquid, pour the same amount out of this bottle.



### B. Managing your thirst

- Suck on unsweetened candy or add lemon slices to your water to help produce more saliva
- Suck on an ice cube slowly as it can help to quench thirst
- Freeze 1-2 serves of cut fruit (e.g. strawberries, kiwi, apple) and consume to relieve thirst during hot days
- Rinse your mouth with water but do not swallow



## What Do I Count as a Fluid?

Fluids include all foods and drinks that are liquid at room temperature, such as:

- Water and ice
- Coffee, tea, milk, milo, fruit juice, alcohol and other beverages
- Desserts such as ice cream, pudding, jelly, red bean soup
- Soup, gravy and sauces
- Watery porridge and oats
- Oral nutrition supplements, e.g. Ensure, Glucerna and Nepro HP etc

### Everyday Fluids and Their Volume



1 teaspoon  
5ml



1 rice spoon  
10ml



1 tablespoon  
15ml



1 soup spoon  
30ml



1 cup  
250ml



1 small soup bowl  
100ml



1 scoop ice cream  
50ml



1 ice cube  
20ml



1 coffeshop glass mug  
300ml



1 takeaway drink bag  
300ml



1 large plastic drink cup  
500ml

The above pictorial only serves as a guide. It is best if you can measure your cups and bowls at home, as they may differ in volume.

## Replace Saturated- and Trans-fat With Unsaturated Fats

A diet high in fat (especially saturated- and trans-fat) can increase your blood cholesterol levels and your risk of heart diseases. To lower this risk, replace most of the saturated- and trans-fats with unsaturated fats in your diet.



### Saturated fat & Trans fat

Increase your blood cholesterol level



### Mono-unsaturated fat & Poly-unsaturated fat

Decrease your blood cholesterol level



## Tips to Reduce Saturated- and Trans-Fat Intake

- Limit deep fried food to no more than twice a week, such as you tiao, curry puffs, banana fritters, fried chicken
- Limit processed meats, such as bacon, sausages, ham, cured meat, luncheon meat, bak kwa
- Limit coconut oil/ milk, butter, cream, 3-in-1 beverages, creamer, mayonnaise, cream-based salad dressings, heavy sauces or gravies
- Limit potato chips, doughnuts, pastries, cakes, cookies, frozen pizza, frozen fried food



### INGREDIENTS













Wheat Flour, Water, **Vegetable Shortening** Pork Meat, Vegetable Oil, Margarine, Sugar, Egg, Light Soya Sauce, Dark Soya Sauce, Oyster Sauce, Shallot,



Look for “partially hydrogenated oil” or “vegetable shortening” on ingredient lists to identify trans-fat



Healthier choices when snacking or cooking:

	<b>Instead of</b>	<b>Choose this</b> ✓
Choose a handful of unsalted nuts (30g), few times a week	 <p>Chips</p>	 <p>Unsalted Nuts</p>
Choose oily fish high in omega 3, a polyunsaturated fat, at least twice a week	 <p>Deep fried fish</p>	 <p>Mackerel, salmon, sardine</p>
Choose spreads with higher unsaturated fat content	 <p>Butter, hard margarine</p>	 <p>Olive/ canola oil soft margarine, avocado</p>
Avoid using animal fat in cooking	 <p>Lard, ghee, duck fat</p>	 <p>Canola, olive, rice bran oil</p>
Choose low-, non- or "light" versions of milk or coconut milk	 <p>Full cream milk, coconut milk</p>	 <p>Low/ non-fat milk, "light" coconut milk</p>
Avoid high fat cooking methods	 <p>Vegetables prepared with heavy sauces or fried vegetables</p>	 <p>Vegetables prepared with a drizzle of healthier cooking oil</p>

Healthier choices when eating out:

	Instead of	Choose this 
Choose lean cuts of meat and poultry/ Remove any visible fat and skin	 Meat with skin 4 tsp oil	 Lean meat without skin 2 tsp oil
Choose noodles in clear soup over noodles in gravy or fried/ dry noodles	 Char kway teow 7.5 tsp oil	 Wonton noodle soup 1 tsp oil
Choose plain brown/ white rice over flavoured rice	 Chicken rice/ Nasi lemak/ Nasi bryani (rice only) 2 tsp oil	 No added oil
Choose dishes cooked without coconut milk	 Laksa 8 tsp oil	 Mee soto 2.5 tsp oil
Avoid adding fried shallots, sauces, and gravies	 Gravy added 3 tsp oil	 No gravy & added oil

 = 1 teaspoon oil = 5g fat

## Increase Fibre Intake

Having more fibre can help to reduce your cholesterol levels and reduce your risk of heart disease. Increase your intake of fruits, vegetables, oatmeal, wholegrains and legumes.

Aim to eat at least half of your total grains as wholegrains



Have 2 servings of fruits and vegetables each daily

This is what 1 serving of fruit looks like:



1 small apple, orange,  
pear or mango  
**(130g)**



1 wedge of papaya,  
pineapple or  
watermelon  
**(130g)**



10 grapes or longans  
**(50g)**



1 medium banana  
**(120g)**

This is what 1 serving of vegetables looks like:



¼ round plate\* of  
cooked vegetables



150g of raw leafy  
vegetables



100g of raw non-leafy  
vegetables



¾ cup\* of cooked leafy  
vegetables  
**(100g)**

My Healthy Plate - fruit & vegetables serving sizes reproduced from HealthHub with permission by Health Promotion Board, Singapore

## Consume a Well-Balanced Diet

The Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension (DASH) and the Mediterranean Diet are both associated with reduced occurrence and severity of heart failure.

<b>DASH</b>	<b>Mediterranean Diet</b>
A balanced way of eating originally designed to lower blood pressure and cholesterol	A diet based on the traditional eating habits of the countries bordering the Mediterranean Sea
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Eating a diet rich in vegetables, fruits, and wholegrains</li><li>• Including fat-free or low-fat dairy products, fish, poultry, beans, nuts, and vegetable oils</li><li>• Limiting foods that are high in saturated fat (e.g. fatty meats, full-fat dairy products, and tropical oils such as coconut, palm kernel, palm oils)</li><li>• Limiting sugar-sweetened beverages, food and snacks</li><li>• Low sodium intake</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Plenty of fruits, vegetables, nuts, seeds and wholegrains</li><li>• Olive oil as a primary fat source</li><li>• Dairy products, eggs, fish and poultry in low to moderate amounts</li><li>• Fish and poultry are more common than red meat in this diet. It also focuses on minimally processed, plant-based food.</li><li>• Wine may be consumed in low to moderate amounts, usually with meals. However, do not start drinking wine if you do not have a habit of drinking.</li><li>• Fruit is a common dessert instead of sweets</li></ul>

## Reduce Alcohol Intake

If you do not drink alcohol, do not start regular alcohol consumption. If you drink alcohol, do so in moderation. Keep to 2 standard drinks for men and 1 standard drink for women.

**1 Standard Drink = 10g Alcohol**



330ml Beer



100ml Wine



30ml Spirits

## Quit Smoking

Smoking and/or exposure to second-hand smoke harms blood vessels, making them stiff. The heart then needs to work more to move blood around the body. This raises blood pressure, which can worsen your heart condition.



## Maintain a Healthy Body Weight

Being overweight or obese can worsen your heart condition. Your body will need more circulating blood to meet its needs. This puts additional stress on your heart.

The Body Mass Index (BMI) can help to determine if you are overweight or obese.

$$\text{BMI} = \frac{\text{Weight (kg)}}{\text{Height (m)} \times \text{Height (m)}}$$

If you are overweight or obese, aim for a target weight loss of at least 5 to 10%. Maintaining this 5 to 10% weight loss can positively affect your heart function and reduce the risk of worsening your heart condition.

<b>Classification</b>	<b>BMI (kg/m<sup>2</sup>)</b>
Underweight	< 18.5
Normal Range	18.5 - 22.9
Overweight	23.0 - 27.4
Obese I	27.5 - 32.4
Obese II	≥ 32.5

## Self-Monitoring

Here are some measurements you can take and record down regularly to monitor yourself:

### Blood pressure

- Ideally, you should keep your blood pressure at  $\leq 130/80$ mm/Hg
- Check with your doctor if you have any special targets for your blood pressure as it can differ depending on your health condition



### Weight

- You should not be gaining weight too rapidly as that could be a sign of water retention (i.e. gaining  $> 1$  kg daily for more than 2 days consecutively)
- You should also ensure your weight is not going down. Please highlight to your doctor if you feel like you have a loss of appetite and are losing weight unintentionally. They will check if you should see a dietitian to assess if you are getting adequate nutrition.



Contributed by Nutrition & Dietetics Service, Allied Health Services

This brochure is produced for educational purposes and should not be used as a substitute for medical diagnosis or treatment. Please seek the advice of a qualified healthcare provider before starting any treatment or if you have any questions related to your health or medical condition.

Information shared is accurate as of July 2024 and subject to revision without prior notice.



Scan QR  
code to  
download  
e-brochure