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# Congestive Heart Failure



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Congestive heart failure (CHF) is the leading cause of cardiovascular disease and related death, with nearly 5 million cases in the United States. Heart Failure (HF) results in reduced heart pumping efficiency in the lower two chambers, with less blood circulating to body tissues, congestion in lungs, ankle swelling, abdominal pain, ascites, hepatic congestion, jugular vein distention, and breathing difficulty.

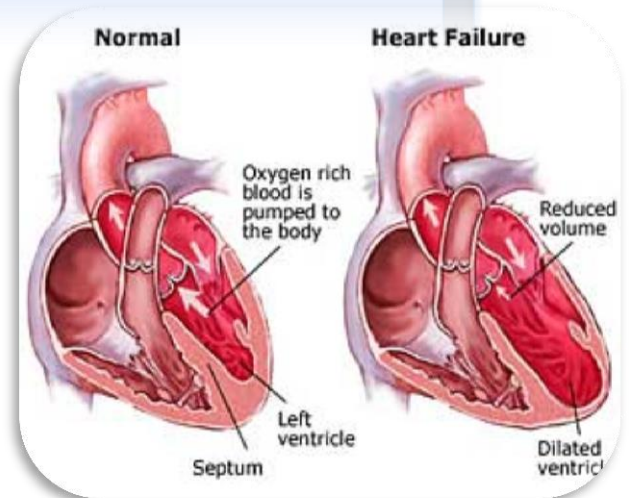
## Heart Failure can be classified into four stages

- Stage A - mild symptoms and no limitation on physical activity
- Stage B - structural heart disease but no signs or symptoms of heart failure
- Stage C - signs and symptoms of structural heart failure
- Stage D - unmanageable heart failure requiring specialized interventions

## What Causes CHF?

- Coronary artery disease (CAD)
- High blood pressure (hypertension)
- Previous heart attack
- History of cardiomyopathy
- Lung diseases such as chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD)
- Severe anemia
- Alcohol abuse
- Disorders of the heart valves
- Medications
  - Nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAID) – Ibuprofen and naproxen
  - Diabetes medications – rosiglitazone (Avandia) or pioglitazone (Actos)
  - Calcium Channel Blockers (CCBS) – Norvasc
- Unknown (idiopathic) causes, such as post recovery from myocarditis
- Less common causes include viral infections, stiffening of the heart muscle, thyroid disorders, and disorders of the heart rhythm.

## Symptoms of CHF



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### For more information:

God's Love We Deliver, Nutrition Service Department

212-294-8103 or 800-747-2023

[nutrition@glwd.org](mailto:nutrition@glwd.org)

[www.glwd.org](http://www.glwd.org)

You may not have any symptoms of heart failure, or the symptoms may range from mild to severe. Symptoms can be constant or can come and go.

## Symptoms

- Shortness of breath (SOB)
- Fatigue
- Edema in legs, ankles, and feet
- Reduced ability to exercise
- Sudden weight gain from fluid retention
- Chest pain/angina
- Dizziness
- Rapid or irregular heartbeat
- Swelling of abdomen (ascites)
- Congested lungs

## Nutrition and CHF

### Sodium

Sodium causes an increase in fluid accumulation in the body's tissues. Because people with CHF often retain excess fluid, they become very sensitive to how much sodium and water they consume. Restricting salt and fluid is often recommended because of the tendency of fluid to accumulate in the lungs and surrounding tissues. Sodium can be found in a variety of forms besides salt. These include monosodium glutamate (MSG), baking powder, baking soda, sodium nitrate, and sodium citrate. In individuals with CHF, an intake of less than 2 grams (2000 milligrams) of sodium per day is generally advised. Select foods with 140 milligrams of sodium or less per serving. The chart below can help you make low-sodium food choices.

In choosing low-sodium products, it is helpful to understand the different terms on a food label.

#### common terms associated with sodium.

Term	Definition
<b>Sodium Free</b>	Less than 5 mg of sodium per serving
<b>Very Low Sodium</b>	35 mg or less of sodium per serving
<b>Low Sodium</b>	140 mg or less of sodium per serving
<b>Reduced Sodium</b>	At least 25% less sodium than original product
<b>No Added Salt/Unsalted</b>	No salt was added during processing, not necessarily sodium free.

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## Tips for Lowering Sodium in the Diet

Choose More Often	Choose Less Often
Fresh, frozen, or canned “with no added salt” vegetables	Hogjaws, ribs, and chitterlings
Fresh poultry, fish, and lean meats	Smoked or cured meats like bacon, deli meats, ham, and sausage
Fresh fruits	Buttermilk
Whole grains	Most cheese spreads and cheeses
Pistachios, sunflower kernels, sesame seeds, and wheat germ (unsalted)	Pickled foods such as herring, pickles, relish, olives, and sauerkraut
Nuts such as almonds, walnuts, and cashews (unsalted)	Salty chips, pretzels, and pork rinds
Herbs, spices, and salt free seasoning blends such as Mrs. Dash	Soy sauce, steak sauce, salad dressing, bouillon cubes, meat tenderizer, and monosodium glutamate (MSG)
	Canned soups, vegetables, and prepared foods, unless they are “low sodium”

### How to read a food label

It is important to read the nutrition label to determine how much of a certain nutrient you are eating. First look at the serving size. All numbers refer to that amount of food. If you eat more, you have to increase the number. If you eat less, you should decrease it. A food item that has 140 mg of sodium or less is considered low in sodium. You can also refer to the % Daily Value. A value less than 5% indicates a low amount of the nutrient. A value greater than 20% indicates a high amount. With sodium, choose foods at or close to 5% DV.

**Start Here**

**Limit these Nutrients**

**Get Enough of these Nutrients**

**Footnote**

Sample Label for  
Macaroni and Cheese

<b>Nutrition Facts</b>	
Serving Size 1 cup (228g) Servings Per Container 2	
Amount Per Serving	
Calories 250	Calories from Fat 110
% Daily Value*	
Total Fat 12g	18%
Saturated Fat 3g	15%
Trans Fat 1.5g	
Cholesterol 30mg	10%
Sodium 470mg	20%
Total Carbohydrate 31g	10%
Dietary Fiber 0g	0%
Sugars 5g	
Protein 5g	
Vitamin A	4%
Vitamin C	2%
Calcium	20%
Iron	4%

\* Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet. Your Daily Values may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs:

	Calories: 2,000	2,500
Total Fat	Less than 65g	80g
Sat Fat	Less than 20g	25g
Cholesterol	Less than 300mg	300mg
Sodium	Less than 2,400mg	2,400mg
Total Carbohydrate	300g	375g
Dietary Fiber	25g	30g

**Quick Guide to % DV**

**5% or less is low  
20% or more is high**

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## What Are Fluids?

Fluids are not just liquids. They are also foods that are liquid at room temperature or have a high fluid content, such as popsicles, soup, ice cream, yogurt, pudding and Jell-O. Eating or drinking too much fluid may make your heart work harder. Too much fluid can cause shortness of breath, poor appetite, and weight gain from swelling and edema. A doctor may ask you to follow a fluid restriction which varies from 1-2 liters (1000-2000 mL) per day, or 33-67oz per day, depending on severity of CHF.



## Fat and Cholesterol

A diet high in saturated fat and cholesterol can exacerbate heart problems.

### Follow these tips to lower saturated fat and cholesterol intake

- Avoid fatty cuts of meat, such as high-fat hamburger and prime cuts of meats
- Trim the visible fat off meat and remove the skin from poultry before cooking
- Eat more fish than red meat
- Bake, broil, grill, boil, or steam foods instead of frying
- Use fat-free milk and dairy products, select cheeses low in sodium and fat
- Eat whole-grain cereals and breads
- Use small amounts of canola oil or olive oil instead of solid fats when cooking
- Limit added fats such as butter or sour cream

## Dining out

Don't be afraid to eat out at restaurants. One can still limit sodium, cholesterol, and saturated fat intake while dining out.

### Tips to help you make healthier choices

- Avoid fast food restaurants
- Request foods to be prepared by baking, broiling, or grilling and without extra oil
- Do not add salt to the foods prepared
- Limit condiments
- Ask for dressing and sauces on the side
- Ask for a "to go" container—portion half your food out, you do not have to eat everything on your plate.



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## Lifestyle Changes

Simple changes in your everyday routine can reduce all of the modifiable risk factors of CHF.

- Eat a heart healthy diet, which is
  - Rich in fruits and vegetables
  - Mostly whole grains; lean meats, fish and poultry; nuts and beans
  - High in fiber, low to moderate in fat, and low in sodium
- Be physically active everyday
  - Moderate aerobic activity helps keep the rest of your body healthy and conditioned, reducing the demands on your heart muscle.
  - Aim for at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic exercise each week.
- Maintain a healthy weight
- Quit smoking
  - Smoking damages your blood vessels, raises blood pressure, and reduces the amount of oxygen in your blood.
- Limit alcohol consumption
  - Drinking too much alcohol can raise blood pressure and produce irregular heartbeats. Excessive alcohol consumption contributes to obesity, alcoholism, and even suicide.

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