

# Managing Congestive Heart Failure

## Lifestyle

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### Daily weights

You need to weigh yourself everyday. An increase in weight is a sign that you're retaining liquid and could lead to heart failure!

Here are some rules to follow:

- Weigh yourself at the same time everyday
  - Best time: in the mornings after you urinate
- Use the same scale and wear similar clothes
- Keep track of your weight in a notebook
- Bring the notebook to your doctor's appointments

### Medication

Your medication is crucial to your managing your heart failure. You should:

- Never run out, continue to get prescriptions from your doctor
- Inform your doctor of all the medication that you take

## Diet

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### Sodium Intake

You must control the amount of salt you eat. Keep your salt intake to under 2000mg/day (about 1 teaspoon).

Here are some tips on controlling your salt intake:

- Take the salt shaker off the table
- Learn to read food labels. Watch out for the words like:
  - Monosodium glutamate (MSG)
  - Soda (ex. baking soda)
  - Sodium carbonate, bicarbonate
  - Sodium anything (caseinate, phosphate, citrate, sulfite)
- Substitute salt with other seasoning such as lemon juice, vinegar, or herbs

Foods that are high in salt	Foods that are Low in Salt
Dill pickle	Fresh fruits and vegetables
Lunch meats (ham etc)	Hot cereals (oatmeal, oat bran)
Instant pudding	Unsalted Macaroni, noodles, rice
Most prepackaged foods (canned soup)	Unsalted cottage cheese
Soy sauce	Unsalted peanut butter
Spaghetti sauce	Egg

### Fluid Intake

You need to limit your fluid intake. It is recommended that you intake no more than 6-8 cups (1.5-2L) a day.

Here are some tips on controlling your fluid intake:

- Measure and label your bowls and cups to help track your fluid intake
- Be cautious about certain foods, as they contain a lot of fluid:

Watermelon	Celery	Ice Cubes	Ice Cream
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## Watching for Physical Changes

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You need to pay close attention to daily physical changes that may indicate a change in your condition.

### Call 911 if you experience...

- Chest discomfort or pain for more than 15 minutes that is not relieved with rest or nitroglycerin
- Severe and persistent shortness of breath
- You've fainted or passed out

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### Adjust your heart failure management if you experience...

#### 1. Signs and symptoms of worsening heart failure

- Increasing weight (2kg or 5lbs over 3 days)
- Increasing ankle swelling
- Increasing shortness of breath
- Trouble sleeping and waking up because of difficulty breathing
- Fast or irregular heart beats
- Feel like you may pass-out

What you should do:

- a. Reduce your salt intake
- b. Reduce your fluid intake by 1-2 cups/day
- c. Adjust your diuretic intake (take an additional water pill)
- d. Contact your doctor immediately or go to your closest ER

#### 2. Warning signs of Overdiuresis ("too dry")

- Extreme fatigue, dizziness, and/or lightheadedness
- Weight loss (more than 2kg or 5lb over 5 days)
- No SOB or ankle swelling

What should you do:

- a. Don't take a water pill for that day (you're taking too much)
- b. Contact your doctor immediately or go to your closest ER

## Important Contacts

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Family Doctor:

Telephone:

Cardiologist:

Telephone:

Pharmacist:

Telephone:

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