

A RECIPE FOR MANAGING HEART FAILURE

A diagnosis of heart failure doesn't have to mean giving up good things to eat. But before you do your grocery shopping, it's important to understand a few basics about sodium, fluid and your heart:



Sodium is a mineral which occurs naturally in foods. In small quantities, sodium helps keep a normal balance of fluid in the body. But it "attracts water," and too much sodium can cause too much fluid in the blood. When you have heart failure and this happens, the extra fluid may accumulate around your heart, lungs and legs. It can cause your legs and feet to swell and also increase your blood pressure.



Salt is about 40% sodium, which is why a heart failure diet is lower in salt. Table salt, sea salt and kosher salt all have about the same percentages of sodium. Many doctors recommend that if you have a diagnosis of heart failure, you limit your sodium to 2,000 milligrams (mg) per day - a little less than one teaspoon of salt.



Drinking too much fluid can lead to your heart's having difficulty pumping an increased amount of blood. Doctors often suggest that if you have heart failure, you aim for 2,000 milliliters (mL) of fluid a day - about two quarts. Budget the fluid, so you can have 500 mL (about 2-1/4 cups) with three meals a day, plus two 250 mL (a little over a cup each) between meals. Don't forget to count fluids in foods like soup and ice cream.



Always check with your Primary Care Physician (PCP) about sodium and fluid restrictions, and before beginning any special diet.



Weigh yourself every day on the same scale and **CALL YOUR PCP IMMEDIATELY IF YOU GAIN MORE THAN 2-3 POUNDS IN ONE DAY, OR A POUND A DAY OVER SEVERAL DAYS.**

Many prepackaged foods such as frozen meals and canned vegetables and entrees contain high amounts of sodium. Be wise and read labels for sodium content. Fresh ingredients and frozen vegetables are good choices for healthful and delicious eating. Cutting back on salt and fluids doesn't have to mean eating a boring diet. There are plenty of savory herbs such as parsley, oregano, dill and basil which you can add to foods. Pepper and lemon juice also add lots of flavor.

To get you started, here's a flavorful and nutritious recipe from the Mayo Clinic website. You can find more information about heart health and delicious recipes at MayoClinic.org.



AVOCADO DEVILED EGGS

INGREDIENTS

- 6 eggs, hard boiled
- 1 ripe avocado, peeled and pitted
- 1-1/2 teaspoons lime juice
- 3 tablespoons light mayonnaise
- 1 teaspoon chopped parsley
- cayenne pepper to taste
- 2 cloves fresh garlic, minced

DIRECTIONS

1. Peel eggs, cut lengthwise and remove yolks.
2. Set aside half the yolks in a bowl and discard the others.
3. Combine egg yolks, avocado, lime juice, mayonnaise, half the parsley, cayenne pepper and garlic.
4. Spoon mixture into egg whites and garnish with other half of chopped parsley. Serves 6.