

# Following a Low-Salt Diet

## ***Why Is Salt a Problem?***

If you have heart failure, you should avoid salt and salty foods. Salt, or sodium chloride, holds water in your body. This causes your legs to swell, your lungs to fill with fluid, and your heart to work harder.

## ***How Can You Control Your Salt Intake?***

You can control your salt intake easily if you follow these simple tips:

- Choose foods that are naturally low in salt. These include most fresh meats, vegetables, starches, and fruits.
- Prepare all foods with little or no additional salt. Instead, try a low-salt spice mix to add zest and flavor.
- Look for low-sodium foods that can be found in many stores. You can probably find salt-reduced versions of the foods you like.
- Read labels so you can find out how much salt is in the package of food. Even foods that have “no salt added” can still contain a large amount of sodium.

You will find that over time your taste buds get used to less salt. Be patient!

*continued*

**Which Foods  
Should You  
Avoid?**

Some foods have a high amount of salt in them already. You should stay away from them as much as possible. These include:

- Processed foods (for example, cold cuts)
- Prepared meals that you buy in a supermarket (for example, frozen dinners)
- Canned vegetables and canned soups
- Catsup, pickles, relish, and many condiments and marinades
- Cheese (even cottage cheese has a lot of sodium)
- Most restaurant foods

Below is a list of foods with high salt content. Avoid eating the following:

Anchovies	Chipped beef	Lox	Salt
Bacon	Cocoa	Meat tenderizer	Salted butter
Baking powder	Cold cuts	MSG	Salted meat
Baking soda	Corned beef	Mustard	Salted nuts
Barbecue sauce	Cottage cheese	Olives	Saltines
Bleu cheese	Dips	Pancake mixes	Sauerkraut
Bouillon	Garlic salt	Pickles	Sausage
Buttermilk	Gravy	Pretzels	Soup (canned)
Canned fish	Ham	Processed cheese	Soup mixes
Canned veggies*	Hot dogs	Relishes	Soy sauce
Casserole mixes	Instant cereals	Salad dressings	Steak sauce
Catsup	Instant popcorn	Salsa	Stuffing mix

*\* If you use mostly canned vegetables, you can lower their salt content by draining them first and rinsing them in fresh water.*