

LOW SODIUM TIPS

Cutting down on sodium in your diet is the most important lifestyle change you can make to feel better and improve your heart failure symptoms. After you leave the hospital, it is very important that you keep track of your sodium and fluid intake on your Daily Food Diary. The following tips are helpful with transitioning to a low sodium diet:

- ♥ **READ** nutrition labels on food. Sodium can be hidden in surprising places such as cold breakfast cereal, doughnuts, muffins and cake.
- ♥ **LIMIT** sodium to 500mg per meal. This will allow for some snacks during the day. When buying food at the grocery store, if the sodium content on the label is more than 250mg/serving, put the food back on the shelf.
- ♥ **COMPLETE** your food diary every day. Refer to the attached "Sodium Contents of Foods" along with nutrition labels on food when calculating your daily sodium intake.
- ♥ **LEARN** to use herbs, spices, onion and garlic for flavor. Try seasoning with lemon or lime juice.
- ♥ **CHOOSE** fresh meats instead of cured or processed meats. Choose fresh or frozen vegetables instead of canned. Avoid canned soups.
- ♥ **REPLACE** table salt with an herb mix or sodium-free seasoning blend. These are available in the spice section at the grocery store. Read the nutrition label and make sure the sodium content is "0 mg". Talk to your doctor before using a salt substitute.
- ♥ **BUY** a low sodium cookbook. Experiment with new recipes. You may discover something new that you really like!
- ♥ **BE PATIENT.** You will eventually lose your craving for salt after a couple of months (this is a learned desire that can be un-learned). You will begin to appreciate the natural tastes of fresh food, fruits and vegetables, and will begin to prefer these foods over the processed versions.
- ♥ **ENJOY** feeling better, sleeping better and participating in more activities that you used to enjoy!