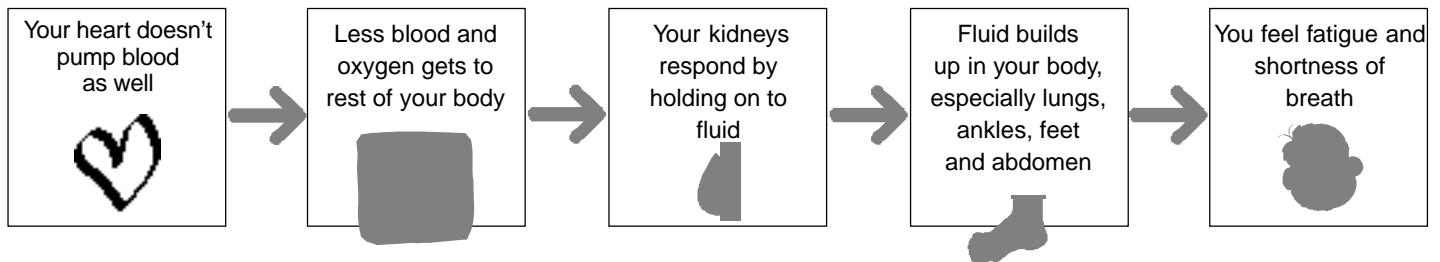


Help Your Heart By Cutting Down on Sodium

The heart's job is to pump blood. When you have heart failure, your heart doesn't pump as well as it should. The heart may have been damaged by a heart attack, high blood pressure, too much alcohol, diabetes or a heart virus. Sometimes the cause may not be known.

What happens when you have heart failure?



What can I do to help my heart?

Even though heart failure is a serious condition, it is possible to lead a full, productive life if you follow some important lifestyle steps. One important step is to keep the amount of sodium you eat to a minimum.

Why do I have to eat less sodium?

Sodium makes your body hold on to more fluid, which makes symptoms of heart failure worse.

Tips for eating less sodium

Table salt is very high in sodium.



- Take the salt shaker off the table. Replace with herb mixtures and other no-salt seasonings.
- Avoid processed convenience foods, canned foods, and salty condiments. Processed foods have more sodium. Fresh foods are best.

- Buy a low-salt cookbook to get ideas on foods and ways to prepare foods without salt (or with less salt).
- Read food labels to check the sodium content in the food. Be sure to also check the portion size, too.
- When eating in restaurants, ask to have your food prepared without salt. Food from fast food restaurants is generally too high in sodium.

- Avoid foods labeled "smoked," "cured," or "pickled." These are always high in sodium content.



- Rinse canned tuna, vegetables, beans and other canned foods to lower the salt. (Try to eat fresh or frozen alternatives.)
- Some over-the-counter medications contain sodium. Alka-Seltzer®, Bromo Seltzer®, some antacids, laxatives and pain killers do, too.



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