

The Goldring Center for Culinary Medicine's

# Guide for Healthy Management of Congestive Heart Failure



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The Goldring Center  
for Culinary Medicine

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TULANE UNIVERSITY

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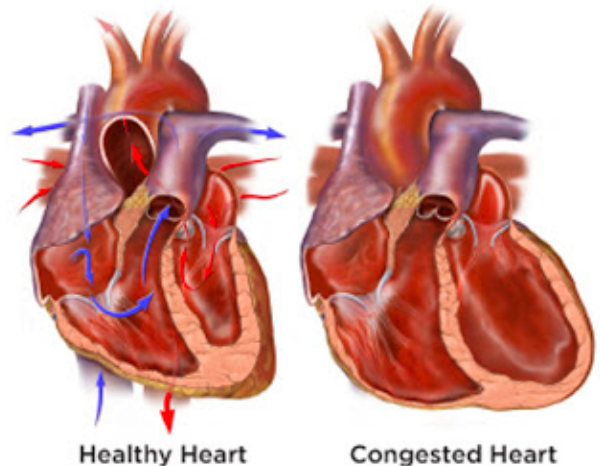
# Congestive Heart Failure

## What is CHF and How Does It Work?

The heart is a muscle that pumps blood throughout your body. “Heart failure” doesn’t mean that your heart has stopped working, but that the muscle is weak and can’t pump blood as well as it needs to.

In Congestive Heart Failure (CHF) your heart cannot keep up with the blood flowing through your body. Blood that’s trying to return to your heart might get backed up, or “congested”, in other parts of your body. This causes swelling (edema) in your legs, ankles, and other parts of your body.

Fluid may also collect in your lungs. This makes it harder to breathe and can cause you to feel short of breath.



Your kidneys are affected by heart failure because your heart is unable to send the kidneys enough blood. Normally, your kidneys filter out excess fluid and salt, but they can’t do this as well when they are not receiving the amount of blood that they need.

Heart failure cannot be reversed, but with proper management you can delay it from getting worse.

## What is Atrial Fibrillation?

AFib is a serious condition, and some people with CHF may also have AFib.

Normally, your heart will pump to a regular beat. In atrial fibrillation (AFib), the upper chambers of your heart beat irregularly or quiver. When the heart is not pumping regularly there is an increased risk of a blood clot forming. If the blood clot is released, it may become lodged in an artery leading to your brain, causing a stroke.

Similar to CHF, the effects of AFib may cause you to feel weak and short of breath.

## Why is My Diet Affected?

When the heart is failing, it will prioritize sending blood to your most important organ – your brain. This means that other organs will not receive as much blood as they need, making them unable to work at full capacity.

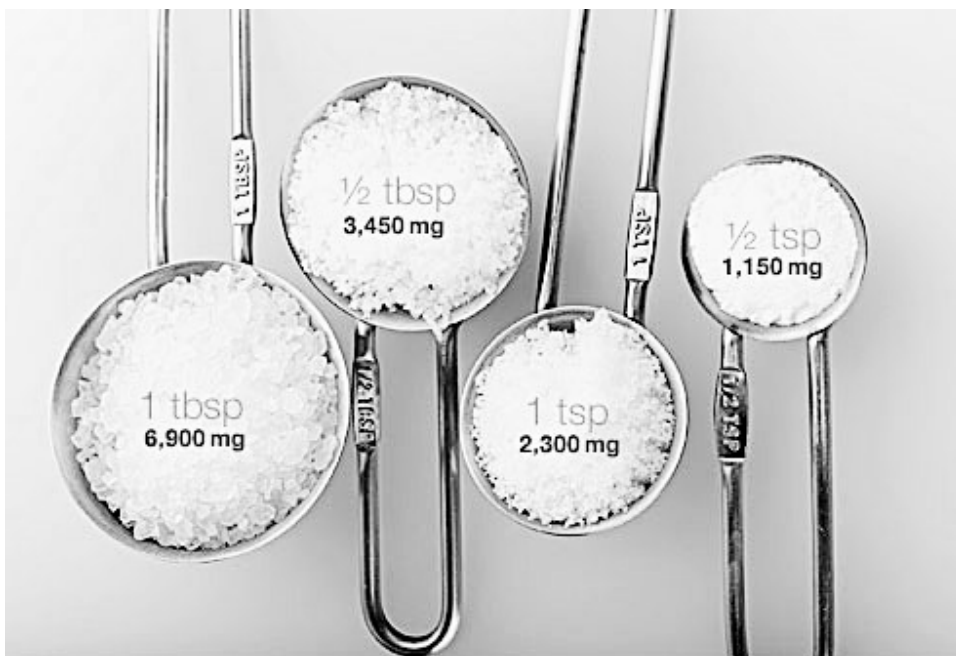
The kidneys are your body's natural filter. They filter out excess vitamins, minerals, and fluid from the blood. Less blood flowing through the kidneys means that less sodium and fluid are being filtered out.

Because you are already at risk of fluid building up in your body, it is important to monitor how much fluid and salt you are consuming. Excess sodium and fluid can make your symptoms worse and possibly cause you to return to the hospital.

## Sodium intake and CHF

Sodium is another word for salt. Sodium is attracted to water and will hold on to extra fluid in your body. The more salt you consume, the more fluid your body will retain.

**It is important that you limit your sodium intake to less than 2000 mg per day. You should aim for each meal to have 300-500 mg of sodium in order to reach this goal.** This is to avoid worsening the fluid buildup in your body.



## Fluid Intake and CHF

Keeping track of how much liquid you eat and drink is extremely important. Extra fluid that is not filtered out in the kidneys can build up throughout your body.

Fluid that accumulates in your lungs will make it harder for you to breathe. Fluid that builds up in your legs and arms is called edema. In edema, you may notice that you feel “puffy” or swollen, this is fluid building up under your skin. Edema can be very uncomfortable, or even painful, so it is important to try and avoid it.

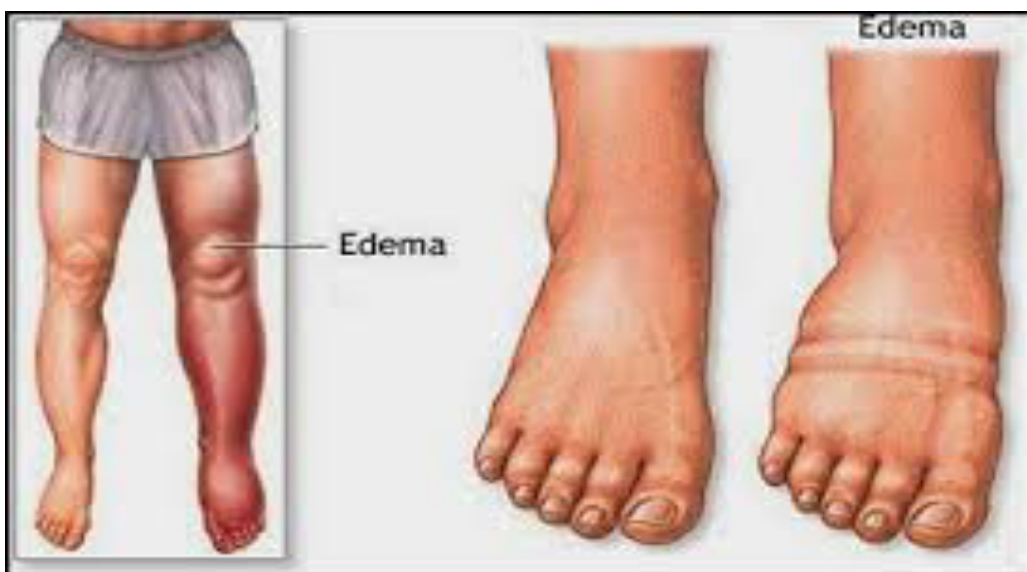
Talk to your doctor about how much liquid you should be consuming. In general, 68 ounces is the recommended amount. This is the same as 2 liters or 8 ½ cups.

Here are some tips to help you consume less than 68 ounces per day:

- Drink only before and after meals
- Take small sips of water throughout the day
- Carry the same water bottle with you so you know how much you’re drinking
- Freeze water bottles overnight and sip on them as they melt throughout the day
- Avoid drinking through straws, they cause you to drink more
- Avoid foods that might make you thirsty, such as spicy foods or salty foods
- Chew gum or suck on hard candy to help with dry mouth

**My goal is to consume \_\_\_\_\_ Ounces of liquid per day**

**or \_\_\_\_\_ Ounces of liquid per meal.**



# Management of Your CHF

## The Importance of Keeping a Log

Writing down what you eat and drink every day can be helpful in keeping track of the lifestyle changes that you are making. This will help you to stay within your sodium and fluid goals for each day.

It is also a good idea to weigh yourself every day. Your weight can be an indication of how much fluid you are holding on to. A weight gain of 2-3 pounds in one day or 5 pounds in one week is an indication that you are retaining fluid.

There are many ways to keep a log. You can write everything down in a journal, take pictures of everything, or utilize a mobile app. *Myfitnesspal* and *Heart Failure Health Storyline* are available for free and can help you to track your weight, medications, and the sodium content of the foods you are eating.

## Taking Your Medication

Taking your medications as prescribed is crucial in keeping your heart healthy. Each medication has a different function in your body. These medications work together to keep fluid off, strengthen your heart, and make it easier for your heart to work.

Here are some tips on remembering to take your medications:

- Set an alarm on your phone
- Use a pill organizer and place it where you will see it every day
- Record your medications in a mobile app
- Have a friend or family members remind you and keep you accountable

## Foods With Fluid

Foods that contain liquid should be counted towards your daily fluid goal. Any food that is liquid at room temperature counts as a fluid. This includes:

- Smoothie
- Ice cream, sorbet, and popsicles
- Gelatin (Jell-O) and pudding
- Soups and Stews
- Milk products, including milkshakes
- Watermelon

## Foods to Avoid

There are some foods that will have a negative impact on your health due to their high salt content. These can be replaced with more nutritious options.

- Pre-packaged foods
- Deli meats and cheeses
- Cured and smoked meats, such as ham and bacon
- Pickling and seasoning meats
- Seasoning mixes such as Tony Chachere's and Slap Ya' Mama
- Many types of bread
- Store-bought baked goods
- Chips and crackers
- Frozen meals
- Gravy and soup mixes
- Boxed dinners such as Zatarians, Hamburger Helper, and Rice a Roni
- Sports drinks
- Salad dressings
- Ketchup and other condiments
- Fast food
- Canned food

**\*\*This list gives you only a few examples. Please check all food labels before deciding on an item\*\***

## Foods to Eat More Of

It may feel like you are restricted with your new diet, but there is a huge variety of foods that people with CHF can eat and enjoy every day. One of the major concerns is that food without salt won't taste very good, but there are a lot of techniques you can use in order to build flavor.

Some ingredients you can use to add flavor without extra salt include:

- Acid, such as citrus juice or vinegar
- Fresh or dried herbs
- No sodium added spice blends
- Spice blends made at home with no salt added to them
- Marinades made at home
- Fresh aromatics such as onion, garlic, and peppers
- Smoked paprika, or smoked peppers such as chipotle or poblano (seasoning, not canned), in red beans or cabbage for a smoky, meaty flavor
- Also try adding foods such as mushrooms and toasted nuts for a deep rich flavor, as well as extra vitamins and minerals!

# The Mediterranean Diet

## What's the story?

When people hear “Mediterranean Diet” they often think of hummus, feta cheese, and olives. The reality is that the Mediterranean Diet is a way of eating that can be tailored to your tastes.

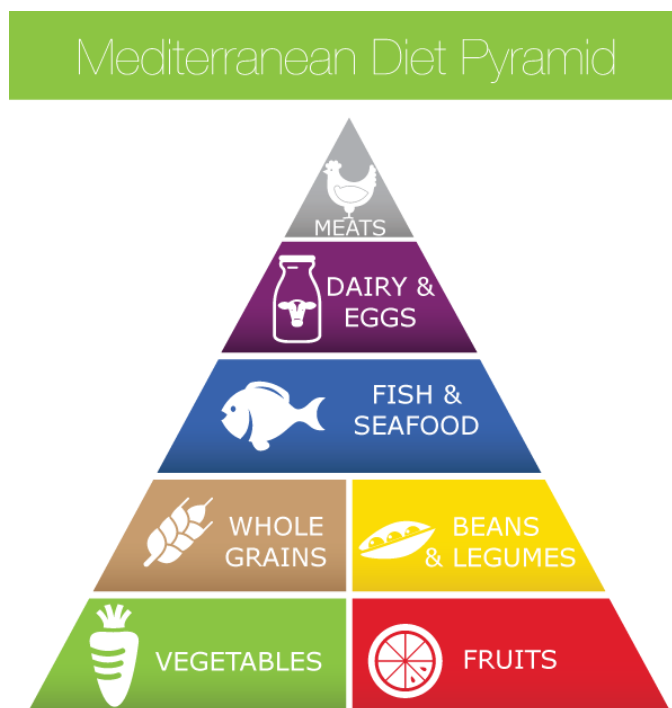
The Mediterranean Diet is all about eating more of the foods that are good for us. This means eating more fruits, more vegetables, more whole grains, more legumes, more seafood, and more healthy fats.

This diet is not very restrictive, and it does not tell you to cut anything completely out of your diet. The focus is on portion control, and making sure you are not consuming *too much* meat and dairy.

## How will the Mediterranean diet help manage my CHF?

The main dietary component of CHF management is limiting how much sodium you consume. The Mediterranean diet limits heavily processed foods, which are generally very high in sodium. If you follow this diet by consuming more fruits, vegetables, whole grains, legumes, and seafood you will naturally consume less salt.

Research has shown that the Mediterranean diet reduces an individual's risk of heart disease. It can also help to keep your heart failure from worsening. Incorporating this diet into your lifestyle can reduce your risk of death by 25%.

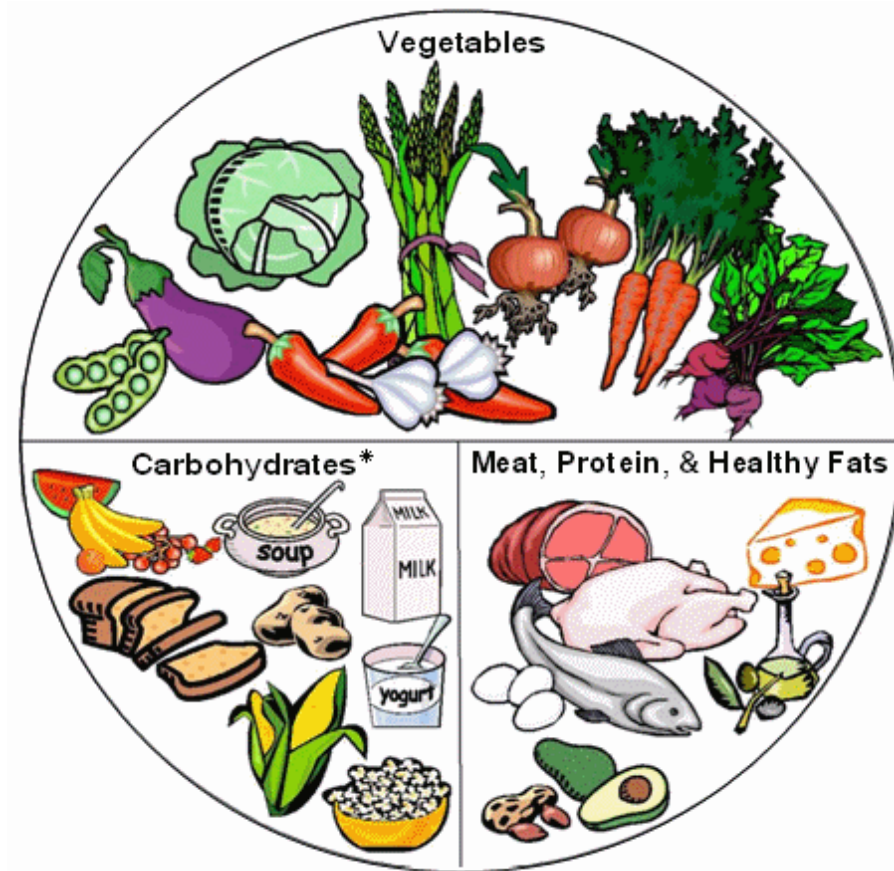


## The Mediterranean Diet

Food Group	How Much?	Foods to Try
Vegetables	2-3 cups <i>per day</i>	Fresh and frozen vegetables are best - they have no added salt.
Legumes	2 cups <i>per week</i>	Lentils. Dry beans. “No salt added” or “low sodium” canned beans. Unsalted peanuts.
Fruits and Nuts	Whole Fruit: 1-1 ½ cups <i>per day</i> Unsalted Nuts: ¼ cup <i>per day</i>	All fresh fruits. Frozen fruit with no sugar added. Unsalted nuts and sunflower seeds.
Whole Grains	1 ½ cups <i>per day</i>	Brown rice, quinoa, barley, old fashioned oats, corn. 100% whole grain bread and pasta.
Fish	2 four ounce servings <i>per week</i>	Salmon, swordfish, drum, snapper, cod, shrimp, raw oysters. Low sodium canned tuna.
Oils/Fats	3 Tbsp plant based oils <i>per day</i>	Replace butter with olive oil, safflower oil, canola oil, and sesame oil.
Dairy	Less than 8 ounces <i>per day</i>	Low-fat milk and yogurt. Cheese is generally high in sodium, choose cheese with a strong flavor so you don’t need to use as much.
Meat	1-2 four ounce servings of LEAN MEAT <i>per day</i>	Choose eggs, chicken, turkey, and lean cuts of beef and pork. Cut off visible fat. <i>Sausage, ham, bacon, deli meat, and pickling meats are all very high in sodium and should be avoided.</i>
Alcohol*	Women: 1 drink <i>per day</i> Men: 2 drinks <i>per day</i>	<i>*Although alcohol is included in the diet, alcohol is often not recommended for people with heart failure. Check with your doctor before consuming alcohol.</i>

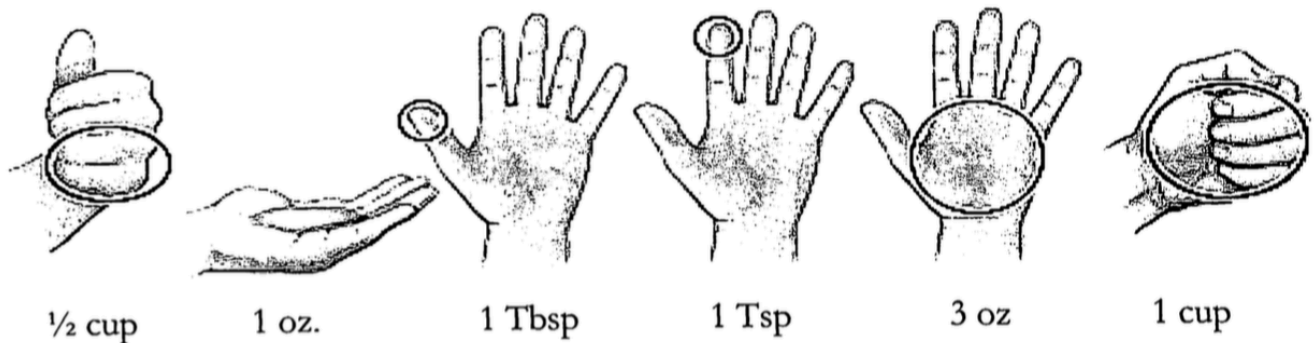
# Build a Healthy Mediterranean Plate

Use this image as an example when making your plate at home



## Measuring Reference:

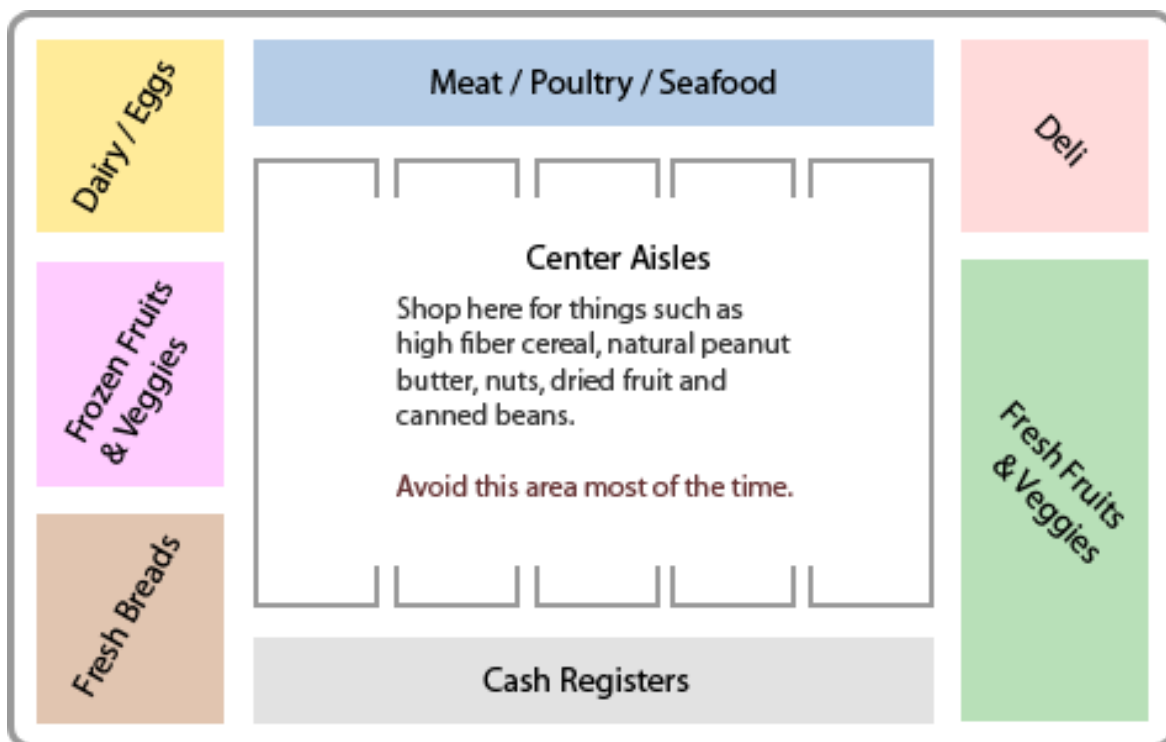
Use this image to help you estimate portions if you don't have measuring cups and spoons on hand



## Going to the Grocery Store

### Where Do I Start?

Shopping for CHF-friendly foods can be intimidating, especially if you are used to someone else shopping for you. The first step is to have a plan! By taking the time to plan out your meals for the week you will spend less time, and less money, at the store. Planning your meals will also eliminate the dinner guessing game and the temptation to buy take out.



### What is “Heart Healthy”?

The American Heart Association (AHA) has their own Heart-Check Certification for foods that meet their dietary recommendations, including sodium recommendations.

Always check for the AHA logo. Companies often create their own “Heart Healthy” logo for foods that may not reflect the AHA recommendations.



While picking products with the AHA Heart-Check can be a good start, it is still important to always read food labels so you can keep track of how much sodium you are eating.

## The Difference Between “Low Sodium”, “Reduced Sodium” and “No Added Sodium”

Food labels can be confusing. Many products make claims about their nutrition, like “low sodium” or “reduced sodium”. Although these seem similar, they’re actually very different.

### When a product is “Low Sodium”

Legally the product must have 140mg of sodium or less per serving.

### When a product is “Reduced Sodium”

Legally the product must have 25% less sodium than the normal product. This can still be a lot of salt if the original product was very high in sodium.

### When a product is “No Sodium Added”

This means that no extra salt has been added to the product. This does not mean that the product is sodium free. However, this is usually going to be the best option.



## Choosing Healthy Snacks

When it comes to snacking, most people prefer either salty snacks or sweet snacks. If you prefer to snack on salty foods you may feel like you're out of options.

Fortunately, many companies have begun making salt-free or lightly salted options of their popular snack foods. Try not to rely too heavily on these items, as homemade snacks will still always have less sodium.

Some snacks to try out include:

- Homemade popcorn with a salt free seasoning blend of your choice
- Hummus with baby carrots or low-sodium crackers
- Homemade tuna salad with low-sodium crackers
- Apples with peanut butter
- Fresh or salt-free salsa with unsalted tortilla chips
- Roasted chickpeas



5 crackers have 30mg of sodium.



Lightly Salted peanuts have about 70mg of sodium per 1/4 cup.



Unsalted peanuts have about 5mg of sodium per 1/4 cup.

## Reading a Food Label

<b>Nutrition Facts</b>	
8 servings per container	
<b>Serving size</b>	<b>2/3 cup (55g)</b>
<b>Amount per serving</b>	
<b>Calories</b>	<b>230</b>
<b>% Daily Value*</b>	
<b>Total Fat</b> 8g	<b>10%</b>
Saturated Fat 1g	<b>5%</b>
Trans Fat 0g	
<b>Cholesterol</b> 0mg	<b>0%</b>
<b>Sodium</b> 160mg	<b>7%</b>
<b>Total Carbohydrate</b> 37g	<b>13%</b>
Dietary Fiber 4g	<b>14%</b>
Total Sugars 12g	
Includes 10g Added Sugars	<b>20%</b>
<b>Protein</b> 3g	
Vitamin D 2mcg	<b>10%</b>
Calcium 260mg	<b>20%</b>
Iron 8mg	<b>45%</b>
Potassium 235mg	<b>6%</b>
<small>* The % Daily Value (DV) tells you how much a nutrient in a serving of food contributes to a daily diet. 2,000 calories a day is used for general nutrition advice.</small>	

Pay attention to the serving size and number of servings per container. The numbers on the nutrition label reflect one serving size.

**ALWAYS check the sodium content of your food. Your goal is to stay below 2000 mg of sodium PER DAY.**

Fiber helps you feel full and moves food through your digestive system. You should aim to have 5-10 grams of fiber per meal.

Added sugar has been found to contribute to heart disease and obesity. Women should aim to have less than 25g of added sugar per day. Men should have less than 36g of added sugar per day.

## Helpful Tips for Dining Out

Unfortunately, heart failure can make going out to eat difficult. Most foods found in fast food, restaurants, cafeterias, and corner stores are extremely high in sodium. It is not recommended that you eat out more than once or twice per month.

### Try to Plan Ahead

When possible, try to plan the restaurant and the meal you are going to have ahead of time. Many restaurants will have nutrition labels for their menu items online.

By looking at the nutrition facts beforehand, you will have time to make an educated decision about what to eat. Be sure to check the sodium content of all foods and try to pick items that are below 500mg of sodium per serving.

**Try to find the best option from Popeyes based on the choices below**

<b>BONAFIDE® CHICKEN - SPICY OR MILD</b>	<b>PORTION SIZE</b>	<b>TOTAL CALORIES</b>	<b>CALORIES FROM FAT (g)</b>	<b>TOTAL FAT (g)</b>	<b>SAT FAT (g)</b>	<b>TRANS FAT (g)</b>	<b>CHOLESTEROL (mg)</b>	<b>SODIUM (mg)</b>	<b>TOTAL CARBS (g)</b>	<b>DIETARY FIBER (g)</b>	<b>SUGARS (g)</b>	<b>PROTEIN (g)</b>
WHOLE WING (EACH)	1	210	130	14	4	0	60	610	8	1	0	13
LEG (EACH)	1	160	80	9	4	0	40	460	5	1	0	14
THIGH (EACH)	1	280	190	21	8	0	50	640	7	1	0	14
BREAST (EACH)	1	380	180	20	8	1	125	1230	16	2	0	35
<b>HANDCRAFTED TENDERS &amp; NUGGETS</b>	<b>PORTION SIZE</b>	<b>TOTAL CALORIES</b>	<b>CALORIES FROM FAT (g)</b>	<b>TOTAL FAT (g)</b>	<b>SAT FAT (g)</b>	<b>TRANS FAT (g)</b>	<b>CHOLESTEROL (mg)</b>	<b>SODIUM (mg)</b>	<b>TOTAL CARBS (g)</b>	<b>DIETARY FIBER (g)</b>	<b>SUGARS (g)</b>	<b>PROTEIN (g)</b>
HANDCRAFTED TENDERS - SPICY OR MILD	3 Pieces	445	181	21	9	1	103	1821	29	2	0	38
HANDCRAFTED TENDERS - SPICY OR MILD	5 Pieces	741	301	34	14	2	172	3035	48	3	0	63
HANDCRAFTED TENDERS - BLACKENED	3 Pieces	170	18	2	0	0	25	550	2	0	0	26
HANDCRAFTED TENDERS - BLACKENED	5 Pieces	283	30	3	0	0	42	917	3	0	0	43
HANDCRAFTED NUGGETS®	6 Pieces	225	120	14	6	1	38	345	15	2	0	11
HANDCRAFTED NUGGETS®	9 Pieces	338	180	20	9	1	56	517	23	2	0	16

## How to Order

Once you decide upon the restaurant follow these helpful tips when ordering:

1. **Ask your server how big the portion size is.** If it's more than you would normally eat, ask for a to-go box and put half away. You'll be less likely to over-eat.
2. **Avoid the bread basket.** Bread is a hidden source of sodium. You can ask your server not to bring bread to your table so you won't be tempted by it.
3. **Ask if you can substitute and if there is a charge associated.** For example, get a baked potato instead of French fries. Mixed veggies or a side salad might also be available.
4. **Avoid unlimited refills of drinks.** Ask your server not to fill your glass unless you ask, so you can monitor how much you drink. You can also ask for a smaller cup.
5. **Ask for sauces, dressings, and gravy to be served on the side.** These are often high in sodium and will add to your fluid goal. Instead of mixing everything together, dip your food into the sauce/dressing in order to get a more concentrated flavor. You will use less this way.
6. **Be creative.** When ordering, sometimes it can be cheaper and just as filling to order an appetizer and side salad as a full meal.
7. **Don't be afraid to ask questions.** Even if you have done your research, be sure to ask your server how things are prepared. Let them know you have a medical condition and precautions must be taken with your food. Be kind and understanding and most restaurants will do their best to accommodate you.

## Coping with Stress

Managing CHF can sometimes be stressful especially when we add in the stress in daily life; small stressors such as waking up late to larger issues such as money or family problems. Stress doesn't just take an emotional toll; it can affect your body as well. It is important to find healthy ways to manage stress so that you don't turn to harmful habits such as smoking, overeating, or alcohol use. Healthy ways to cope with stress include:

- **Faith-based activities/ Meditating-** meditating or participating in faith based activities can be a helpful way to cope with stressor and find support
- **Hobbies-** Do something that makes you happy whether it's reading, gardening, fishing, crafting, or playing music. Hobbies that you enjoy can provide a mindful activity to help you relieve stress.
- **Support-** Finding support groups to share stories about causes of stress and tips to overcome whether it's friends, family, or organized support groups. It's important to have a network of people you can lean on and help you when you need them. It can be helpful to meet other people with diabetes to provide support and remind you that you are not alone.
- **Positive Attitude-** Having a positive attitude can make a big difference. Think about what makes you happy, the people in your life, the success you've had, the activities that you enjoy.
- **Be Nice –** Be nice to yourself. Treat yourself like you treat your best friend. That means celebrate your successes and congratulate yourself, no matter how big or small. Don't beat yourself up if things do not go as planned. Do the best you can and do something that makes you happy everyday.

It's normal to feel discouraged from time to time however if the stress becomes overwhelming or you are feeling depressed don't forget that help is available. You have a team of family and friends, your doctor, RD, etc. to help you and provide additional resources.

**What type of stress relieving activities do you like to do?**

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## Problem Solving

We talk a lot about planning when it comes to managing your CHF, from planning food choices, to meal and snacks. But as we all know, sometimes life does not go according to plan. If unexpected things occur and it disrupts your routine, what do you do?

We must be prepared to problem solve through life's challenges and curve balls. This is where your Dietitian can help!

Don't forget SLIP!

**S**top behavior and realize that you are only human.

**L**ook at the situation realistically

**I**nvestigate the trigger

**P**lan accordingly for future similar situations



## Keep Track!

There are several phone apps and websites that you can use to keep track of your daily intake. The USDA website, [www.choosemyplate.gov](http://www.choosemyplate.gov), has a variety of materials on healthy eating, a BMI calculator, and their SuperTracker. The SuperTracker is available both online and via phone app; you simply create an account and type in the foods and beverages you consume during the day. It will keep track of what food groups you are eating, how much you are eating, and your physical activity. The following is a list of other apps and websites you can use to keep track of your daily consumption. But be aware that some apps keep track of sugar without distinguishing where the sugar came from. If it came from fruit or whole grains, warning messages can be ignored. If you are over on sugar due to candy and processed foods, it can help you be more mindful of what you eat.

### Food Tracker Apps:

*Heart Failure Health Storyline*- helps you track your symptoms, weight, doctors' appointments, and food. As well as allowing you to communicate with a network of people to help keep you on track. This is a great resource to have on hand to bring to doctors appointments and keep you on track daily. Available on iPhone and android.

*MyFitnessPal*- helps you reach your goals, record your recipes, and enter in foods from various restaurants and food chains. The pre-loaded food database helps you enter in common brands of foods. Available on iPhone and android.

*The Eatery*- Like Instagram for your food! This app lets you take pictures of your food and then helps you figure out if it is healthy or not. Strengths and weaknesses of your dish are provided as well as improvement tips. Available on iPhone and android.

# Goal Setting

## Defining Your Goals

In order to achieve your goals, first you must make a detailed step-by-step plan. Think of them as smaller goals to get you to the bigger goal! We will first break down your goals into categories, then into smaller more manageable goals. Give yourself daily goals, weekly goals, and monthly goals that are specific and easy to do. For example, a daily goal might be to eat two- three servings of fresh vegetables. A weekly goal might be to cook dinner 6 nights.

*What is your ultimate goal?*

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## Nutrition Goals and Eating Habits

**First, you will want to look over your current diet.** Start by recording every snack, beverage, and meal that you eat (along with your weight) for a couple of days. Bring this food diary to your dietitian and discuss how to improve from there. Not drinking during meals could be a great start, as well as swapping salty snacks for air-popped popcorn.

*What are some healthy alternatives to implement into your current diet?*

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**Second, after implementing these swaps into your diet you can make other changes.** These changes can be smaller portion sizes, adding more vegetables and fruits, cutting back on meat consumption, or drinking less fluid. It is important to make one change at a time rather than all at once to avoid overwhelming yourself and reverting back to your old ways. Change what you think is the easiest first and go from there. Discuss what you find to be easy and most difficult to change with your dietitian.

*What will be the easiest to change about your diet?*

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*What will be the most challenging to change about your diet? Why?*

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What are some things that can motivate you to change? Is it your family, spouse, or friends? Remind yourself of why it is you decided to make a change in the first place.

### **Mentally Tough**

It isn't enough to just simply write down your goals and say that you will accomplish them. You have to truly want to change and have the motivation. Having mental goals will help you accomplish your nutrition and fitness goals. Find what motivates you to get out the door and get moving or to make healthier meal choices. Here are a few ways to stay mentally strong and on the path to achieving your goals.

#### **Don't feel guilty.**

If you had soup with dinner, or some chips at lunch, don't beat yourself up. Everyone makes mistakes and suffers setbacks. The important thing is recognize what caused you to mess up and change accordingly. Did you buy soup for dinner because you didn't have anything planned? Make a menu at the beginning of the week to eliminate the "What's for Dinner?" game. Understanding what led us to mess up our plan can prevent making the same mistake twice. One little bump in the road doesn't mean you should pull over and stop.

## Reward Yourself.

Often a reward can be the motivation you need to accomplish your goals. This can be new cooking equipment to help you prepare healthy meals at home or a trip to the salon to feel pampered. Rewards can be a great way to stay on track

For each goal you accomplish, reward yourself with a day trip, new outfit, manicure, or a night out with friends.

*What are some rewards that can motivate you to accomplish your goals?*

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## Additional Resources

Don't forget to check out additional resources that can help keep you on track to a healthy life!

### CHF Websites:

- [www.heart.org](http://www.heart.org)
- [www.womenheart.org](http://www.womenheart.org)
- [www.heartfailurematters.org](http://www.heartfailurematters.org)

### Cooking Classes and Recipes:

- Sign up online or ask Chef Kerri RDN, LDN about free cooking classes and recipes for people with CHF
- Recipes can be found at [www.culinarymedicine.org](http://www.culinarymedicine.org)

### Apps to Keep You On Track:

- MyFitnessPal
- Heart Failure Health Storyline
- Fit NOLA
- Lose It!

### Doctor Appointments:

- Make sure you see your Primary Care doctor on a regular basis as well as regular appointments with your cardiologist and dietitian.