

Sodium Restriction for Patients with Heart Failure

Sodium Restriction in Heart Failure

- Sodium is found in salt that we add to food
- Too much sodium has been shown to increase hypertension and may also hurt heart function
- Diets high in sodium (>2.8g daily) increase the risk of heart function getting worse in some patients.
- Sodium restriction can be used in combination with fluid restriction to help patients with heart failure.

When to Prescribe Sodium Restriction

- Sodium restriction is suggested in patients with hypertension and cardiovascular disease, including heart failure.
- Sodium limitation is especially helpful in high blood pressure that is hard to control
- Eating less sodium, patients may become more responsive to antihypertensive medications

Recommendations

- Some patients are advised to aim for between 2g/day and 3g/day of sodium.
- For patients who are just beginning to monitor their dietary intake, this can be approximated by about **1 teaspoon daily**, including sodium that is found in processed foods.
- Counselling with a dietician or health care provider about reducing sodium intake is strongly advised

Monitoring Sodium Levels

- Sodium monitoring is **not** a reflection of how much sodium/salt is in your diet but is part of what is used to make sure your fluid levels are balanced
- Checking sodium levels should be done for patients when first diagnosed with heart failure, as well as during ongoing treatment
- Serum Sodium: target range 135-145 mEq/L
- Developing low sodium can be a sign of too much water in your body or heart function getting worse. A low sodium on your blood work should not change salt limitation without talking with your health care team

Additional Reference Resources

[Canadian Cardiovascular Society](#)

[Heart and Stroke Canada](#)