

# Your Heart Failure and Fluid Restriction

## A guide for patients

Read this resource to learn:

- What is heart failure
- How to manage fluid restriction
- How to control the amount of fluids you drink



## **What is heart failure?**

If you have heart failure, this means that your heart is not pumping blood through your body as well as it should. *(Heart Failure Society of America)*

## **Why is fluid restriction an important way to manage my heart failure?**

When you drink too much fluid, your heart has to work very hard to pump the excess fluid around your body. Too much fluid in your body can make your heart failure even worse and, can cause shortness of breath, weight gain, swelling of the feet and legs, lack of energy, a swollen or tender abdomen, a cough, and difficulty sleeping at night.

## **Things that you can do to control your fluid volume and help manage your heart failure:**

### **Limit the fluids you drink**

Ask your doctor or nurse practitioner about how much fluid you should have each day.

- Often 1 to 1.5 L (4 to 6 cups) per day is what is recommended for people with heart failure. However, the amount recommended for you may be different.

## Tips to control the amount of fluid you drink

### 1 Plan ahead.

Spread out the fluid you drink over the day.

For example:

Breakfast 250 ml = 1 cup

Lunch 250 ml = 1 cup

Dinner 250 ml = 1 cup

750 ml or 3 cups to have between meals and bedtime = 1.5 Litres

### 2 Some pills can be taken with meals or soft food, like applesauce. Ask your pharmacist what medicine you can take with food.

### 3 Use small cups and glasses and sip slowly.

### 4 Freeze some of your fluid in an ice cube tray. You may find it more pleasing than drinking the same amount of fluid, as it stays in the mouth longer.

### 5 Keep track. Post some paper on the fridge.

Each time you drink, measure it first then mark it down on the paper.

## How to feel less thirsty



Brush your teeth more often or, rinse your mouth with water, but do not swallow it. Be sure not to over-brush.



Keep your mouth cool and fresh by rinsing with cold mouthwash.



Lemon wedges, hard sour candies, chewing gum, breath mints or breath spray may help to keep your mouth from drying out.



Add lemon or lime to your water or ice.



Eat fruits and vegetables ice cold. Frozen grapes or strawberries are very nice.



Try licking a lemon or a lime.



Use a humidifier to moisten the air. This will help your mouth feel less dry.

## Examples of fluid

8 ounces = 1 cup = 250 ml

### Some examples of fluid:

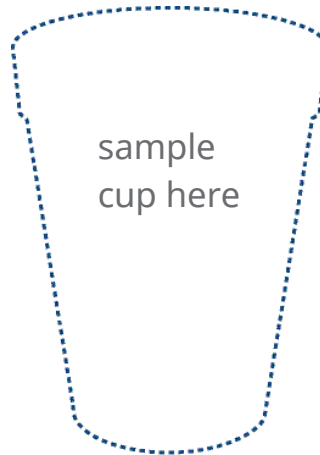
- Water
- Tea or coffee
- Milk, cream
- Juices and fruit drinks
- Soda pop
- Soup
- Liquid nutrition supplements, such as Ensure<sup>®</sup> or Boost<sup>®</sup>
- Jello<sup>®</sup>
- Ice cream, sherbet
- Popsicles
- Ice cubes
- Alcoholic drinks

### A helpful tip for you:

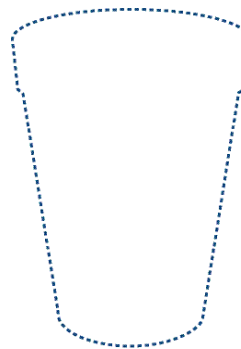
- Use a measuring cup to see how much fluid your drinking glasses, tea or coffee cup, and soup bowl holds. Knowing how much fluid they hold will help you to plan how much fluid you can drink for the day.
- Weigh yourself every day. Take your weight in the morning, after urinating and before eating. Write down your weight to help you keep track.

## Hospital cup sizes

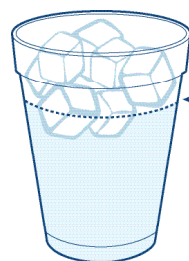
Large styrofoam cup  
(drinking water)  
= **2 cups or 500 ml**



Small styrofoam cup  
= **200 ml**



Small styrofoam cup filled with ice to top of cup  
= **175 ml**



← **Fill to here**



## For more information about heart failure and fluid restriction, visit these websites:

- [www.heartfailurematters.org](http://www.heartfailurematters.org)
- [www.abouthf.org](http://www.abouthf.org)
- [www.uhnpatienteducation.ca](http://www.uhnpatienteducation.ca)



### About The Peter Munk Cardiac Centre

For more information about heart and circulation conditions, a glossary of terms, maps, information about our location and how to be referred, please visit [www.petermunkcardiaccentre.ca](http://www.petermunkcardiaccentre.ca)



Visit [www.uhnpatienteducation.ca](http://www.uhnpatienteducation.ca) for more health information.

Contact us to provide feedback or request this brochure in a different format, such as large print or electronic formats: [pfep@uhn.ca](mailto:pfep@uhn.ca)

---

© 2019 University Health Network. All rights reserved.

Use this material for your information only. It does not replace advice from your doctor or other health care professional. Do not use this information for diagnosis or treatment. Ask your health care provider for advice about a specific medical condition. You may print 1 copy of this brochure for non-commercial and personal use only.

Form: D-5808 | Author: Mary Weiland, RD, CDE & Linda Mather, RN, BScN / Revised by: Margaret Brum & Amanda Kaden | Reviewed: 06/2019