

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.

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

When you drink too much fluid, your heart has to work hard to pump extra fluid around your body. Too much fluid in your body can make your heart failure even worse and can cause the following symptoms:

- shortness of breath
- weight gain
- swelling of the feet and legs
- lack of energy
- a swollen or tender abdomen
- coughing
- 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 2 litres (4 to 8 cups) per day is what is recommended for people with heart failure.

Your healthcare team recommends: _____

1 cup = 250 ml = 8 fluid ounces

4 cups = 1000 ml = 1 litre = 32 fluid ounces

6 cups = 1500 ml = 1.5 litres = 48 fluid ounces

Some examples of fluid:

- Water
- Tea or coffee
- Milk, cream
- Juices and fruit drinks
- Soda pop
- Soup
- Liquid nutrition supplements, such as Ensure® or Boost®
- Jell-O®
- Ice cream, sherbet
- Popsicles or Freezies
- Ice cubes or ice chips
- Alcoholic drinks (drink only with your doctor's permission)
- Watermelon

Tips to control the amount of fluid you drink

✓ Plan ahead.

- Spread out the fluid you drink over the day.

For example:

- Breakfast 250 ml = 1 cup
- Between meals 250 ml = 1 cup
- Lunch 250 ml = 1 cup
- Between meals 250 ml = 1 cup
- Dinner 250 ml = 1 cup
- Before bedtime 250 ml = 1 cup

Total Daily Fluid Intake = 1.5 litres

- ✓ Some pills can be taken with meals or soft food like applesauce. Ask your pharmacist what medicine you can take with food.
- ✓ Use small cups and glasses and sip slowly.
- ✓ 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.
- ✓ Keep track of the fluid you are drinking. Use a tracking sheet posted on your fridge or make notes on your phone.
- ✓ Plan the amount of water you will drink each day.
 - Fill a water bottle with the amount you plan to drink. Drink from the bottle to avoid having to measure each time you drink.

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, non-alcoholic mouthwash.



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



Add a lemon or lime wedge to your water or ice, or try licking the citrus fruits for a fresh flavour in the mouth.



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



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

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.

For more information on fluid restriction, visit these websites:

- www.heartfailurematters.org
- www.abouthf.org
- www.uhnpatienteducation.ca

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For more information about heart and circulatory conditions, a glossary of terms, maps, information about our location and how to be referred, please visit www.petermunkcardiaccentre.ca



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