

Heart Failure (Congestive Heart Failure CHF)

CHF results from damage to the heart or weakening diseases (such as a heart attack or other medical conditions). Your body cannot perform properly if the heart is not strong enough to pump blood to deliver oxygen and nutrients, especially during activity or when under stress. Also the heart may not be able to keep up with the flow of blood from the lungs to the heart. This can cause build up of fluid in your lungs and other parts of your body (swelling in your hands or ankles, called edema). There is no cure for CHF, but you can manage through medical and lifestyle interventions.

You may be required to limit fluids and/or sodium in your diet. Why? Too much sodium makes your body hold onto water, causing:

- increased workload for your heart
- difficulty breathing
- weight gain (water)
- high blood pressure, and
- swelling of legs and ankles.

By decreasing your fluid and/or sodium intake you can help decrease the workload of the heart and limit fluid build up. Discuss with your doctor and dietitian how much you should restrict your fluid and sodium intake. If applicable you may also need to continue following your other dietary interventions for weight management, diabetes or coronary artery disease.

[Managing Congestive Heart Failure](#) explains CHF further and includes nutrition tips on how to balance meals, limit sodium, fluid intake, manage appetite and easy meal preparations.

