

## Fluid Restricted Diet

A fluid restricted diet limits the amount of fluid you consume each day. In addition to beverages, many foods provide fluids. Examples include ice cream, yogurt, gelatin, pudding, soups, sauces, and juicy fruits.

A fluid restricted diet helps prevent fluid from building up in the body. "Fluid Restriction" means that you can only have a certain amount of fluid each day. Following a fluid restricted diet can decrease stress to the body and reduce the risk of further complications. Fluid restrictions are most commonly needed with the following health conditions:

- Heart problems, including congestive heart failure (CHF)
- Kidney problems, including end stage renal disease (ESRD) and people on dialysis
- Liver problems, including cirrhosis
- Endocrine and adrenal gland disorders, including adrenal insufficiency
- Conditions that cause the release of stress hormones
- Treatment with medications called corticosteroids
- Low levels of sodium in the blood (hyponatremia)

### Fluid Prescription:

Your physician has recommended that you limit fluid intake to: \_\_\_\_\_ ml per day  
(equal to \_\_\_\_\_ ounces or \_\_\_\_\_ cups).

## Signs of Fluid Retention

When your body is retaining fluid, you may experience one or more of the following symptoms listed below. If you notice any sudden change or progressive worsening of symptoms, contact your doctor.

- Swelling of hands, ankles, and/or feet
- Increased size of the veins in your neck
- Weight gain
- Increased urination
- Limited activity tolerance/shortness of breath
- Decreased appetite/feeling full earlier than usual
- Increased blood pressure
- Rapid heartbeat
- Dizziness, weakness, fatigue, and/or confusion

Dietitian: \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
Facility: \_\_\_\_\_

**This handout is meant for use during an appointment with a registered dietitian only and is not intended for use by other clinicians.**

## What Counts as Fluid?

- **Any beverage you drink**
  - Water
  - Coffee
  - Tea
  - Soda pop
  - Sports drinks
  - Milk
  - Liquid creamer
  - Juice
  - Fruit-flavored drinks, lemonade, punch
  - Nutrition supplements like Ensure or Boost
  - Liquid medicine
  - Alcohol
- **Fluids that are part of a food**
  - Soup
  - Sauces
  - Gravies
  - Pudding
  - Yogurt
  - Salad dressing
  - Syrup
- **Foods that will melt down to a liquid**
  - Gelatin
  - Ice cream
  - Frozen yogurt
  - Sherbet
  - Milkshakes/smoothies
  - Popsicles
  - Ice cubes
  - 1 cup ice cubes/chips = ½ cup fluid melted
- **Juicy fruits or vegetables**
  - 1 cup juicy fruit/veg = ½ cup fluid
  - Melons (watermelon, cantaloupe, honeydew, etc.)
  - Berries (strawberries, blueberries, raspberries, blackberries, etc.)
  - Tomatoes
  - Cucumbers

## Helpful Hints

- Fluid you use to take medications must also be counted in your fluid restriction.
- Keep a fluid log.
  - Record your daily fluid intake.
  - Make sure you know how much fluid your cups, bowls, mugs, and glasses hold.
  - See Fact Sheet “Heart Failure: Tracking Your Fluids” for more tips
- Weigh yourself daily. A rapid change in weight can be the results of fluid gain or loss.

### Fluid Measurements

- 1 ounce (oz) = 30 mls (milliliter) = 2 tablespoons
- 1 cup = 8 oz = 240 mls
- 4 cups = 32 oz = 1 quart = 960 mls
- 1000 mls = 1 liter
- 48 oz = 6 cups = 1 ½ quarts = 1440 ml
- 64 oz = 8 cups = 2 quarts = ½ gallon = 1920 ml

- Eat a low salt diet
  - Salty foods will increase your thirst
  - Most of the health conditions that require a fluid restriction will also be improved by following a diet low in sodium (salt). Generally the recommendation is to aim for less than 2 grams (or 2000 mg) sodium daily. See **Fact Sheet “Sodium-Restricted Daily Eating Plan: 2000 Milligrams or Less per Day”** for more information. Talk to your doctor or registered dietitian if you have any questions about your need to follow this.
- Plan out the amount of liquid you will have during the day.
  - How much will you need to take medications, with meals, etc.?
  - Identify your preferred drinks and drinking pattern to more easily adjust to your fluid limits
- Take small sips. This can give the perception of drinking a larger amount than you actually are.
- Use a designated container – cup, bowl, mug, etc.
- Maintain good oral hygiene.

## Tips to reduce thirst and alleviate dry mouth

- Keep hard candies, mints and gum available. Some people find sugar-free varieties to be more thirst quenching.
- Brush your teeth.
- Chill mouthwash and gargle for a fresh feeling.
- Rinse your mouth with water (no swallowing).
- Prepare a measured amount of ice cubes to suck on. Flavor with lemon juice, if desired. This will count as some of your fluid amount, but will last longer and be more refreshing than a similar amount of fluid to drink.
- Add lemon or cucumber to your water to help quench your thirst.
- Suck on a lemon slice.
- Freeze or partially freeze pieces of fruit for a refreshing treat: like lemon wedges, orange sections, peaches, berries, or grapes.
- Try chilled applesauce.
- Breathe through your nose and not your mouth.
- Avoid mid-day heat.



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