

SODIUM CONTROLLED DIET

Sodium is a nutrient that is important to good health. It is found naturally in most foods such as milk, meats, and certain vegetables, and is also added in the form of table salt (sodium chloride), preservatives, and flavour enhancers (e.g. seasoned salt, Accent®, soy sauce). Health professionals recommend to limit sodium intake to 2400 mg (one teaspoon salt) per day.

A sodium-controlled diet will help you manage high blood pressure (hypertension). It will also help prevent water retention. Even if you are taking medication, it is still important to follow a sodium-controlled diet to help the medication work more effectively.

Most of the sodium in a typical diet comes from salt added to foods during processing or preparation. Food processors add salt or other sodium derivatives during production as a preservative and for flavor. Popular foods with high sodium content include pickled foods, canned vegetables and soups, snack foods, cured meats, and packaged mixes.

If you gradually decrease the sodium and salt in your diet, you will find that your taste for salt declines. Commercial salt substitutes contain potassium chloride and may not be appropriate for your health condition. Using spice and herb blends instead of salt can add satisfying flavour to just about any recipe. Reducing sodium is a good idea for everyone in the family, so there is no need to cook a separate pot.

Suggestions to decrease your sodium intake

- taste your food before adding salt
- add herbs, spices, lime, fresh garlic rather than salt to flavour food
- be aware that fast food is very high in sodium
- reduce your intake of cured meat such as corned beef, salt beef, hot dogs, bacon, sausage, and processed luncheon meats
- use unprocessed foods as often as possible such as pasta with fresh herbs (hold the powdered seasoning packets), fresh or frozen vegetables, old fashioned oatmeal (not instant)
- use convenience foods sparingly
- substitute fruits, unsalted nuts or unsalted crackers for high salt items such as potato chips
- milk and yogurt are lower in sodium than most cheeses

This pamphlet serves as an introduction to some of the diet modifications that may be recommended by our team of healthcare providers. As with other therapies, nutrition therapy is best individualized to your particular needs. For more information about your diet and nutrition care, ask to speak with our registered dietitian.

HIGH FIBRE DIET

Fibre is the structural part of plant foods – fruits, vegetables, and grains that are not digested or broken down in the digestive system. You may have heard it called “roughage” or “bulk”.

There are two types of dietary fibre – insoluble and soluble. Insoluble fiber does not dissolve in water. It is found in whole grains such as whole wheat, bran, and vegetables. Soluble fibre, on the other hand, does dissolve in water, forming a gelatinous substance in the bowel. Soluble fibre is found in oatmeal, oat bran, fruit, barley and legumes (beans and peas such as pigeon peas). Fibre has a therapeutic and preventative role in health and is used to:

- help prevent constipation and diarrhea
- hemorrhoid prevention
- diverticulosis prevention
- colon cancer prevention
- blood cholesterol and cardiovascular disease control
- improve blood sugar levels in persons with diabetes
- provide a sense of “fullness” to help reduce calories for weight reduction

To increase fibre in your diet, include more of the following:

- whole grain foods such as bran cereals, 100% whole wheat bread, brown rice
- lima beans, pigeon peas, kidney beans, and other legumes
- fresh fruits, including the skin and pulp
- dried or stewed fruits such as prunes, raisins, or apricots
- fibrous vegetables such as carrots, cassava, yam, beets, potato, including skin
- raw or fresh vegetables such as cabbage, spinach, celery, tomato

As you add more fibre to your diet:

- do it gradually. Too much fibre added too quickly may cause cramping, bloating, or diarrhea
- drink plenty of fluids (about 8 cups per day)
- eat slowly and chew your food thoroughly
- eat your meals at regular intervals

If you have questions or concerns about your hospital diet, ask your nurse to contact our registered dietitian (RD).

Individualized nutrition counseling available through Nutrition Services. Ph: 302-4641.



LIQUID DIET

Clear Liquid Diet

The clear liquid diet offers the simplest form of food with regard to digestion and absorption. It does not stimulate digestive processes and leave no residue. It provides foods that are liquid at room temperature such as clear juice, clear fruit flavoured beverages, broth, tea, coffee, sugar, hard candy, and gelatin dessert.

The Clear Liquid Diet is used prior to some diagnostic tests, pre- and post-operatively, and when other liquids and solid foods are not tolerated. The Clear Liquid Diet helps prevent dehydration and relieves thirst.

Full Liquid Diet

The Full Liquid Diet is composed of foods that are liquid or that liquefy at room temperature. It also includes everything allowed on the Clear Liquid Diet plus strained cream soups, most cooked cereals, and ice cream. The Full Liquid Diet uses milk and milk-based products as sources of protein. If you are lactose intolerant, the dietitian will recommend lactose-free products.

The Full Liquid Diet is often used as a transition between clear liquids and solid foods. It is prescribed when there are problems with chewing and swallowing and following oral surgery or surgery of the head and neck. This diet may also be used when your mouth or throat is sore. It is a temporary diet because it is deficient in some vitamins and minerals. However, liquid protein/calorie supplements may be included if you need to follow a Full Liquid Diet for extended periods of time.

Doctors Hospital Diet Guide

SOFT DIET

The Soft Diet is used for conditions associated with poor appetite or when the ability to digest food is impaired. Texture is modified by offering items easily chewed, swallowed and digested, moderately low in fibre, and mildly seasoned. Your individual food tolerances and preferences will be respected.

The Soft Diet is sometimes used as a progression to a Regular Diet following surgery. The Soft Diet is based more on tradition than scientific rationale. Common symptoms of gas and “fullness” following surgery are often caused by anesthesia, prolonged bed rest, and reintroduction of any type of food to the digestive tract. Tender foods such as cooked vegetables, canned fruits, and refined breads and cereals are used. Fried and highly seasoned foods are discouraged since they may be difficult to digest. Reintroduction of any food following surgery is best tolerated in small portions.

DIET FOR HIGH BLOOD CHOLESTEROL

Dietary changes can help you reduce blood cholesterol. A heart-healthy diet helps to achieve or maintain normal levels of cholesterol. These foods reduce overall levels of low-density cholesterol (LDL), also known as the “bad” cholesterol, or raise overall levels of high-density cholesterol (HDL), also known as “good” cholesterol.

While your body does need some fat for proper functioning, the challenge is to choose foods with the right kinds of fat and avoid foods with the wrong kinds. Two types of dietary fat – saturated fats and trans fats – raise blood cholesterol levels which may be harmful to the heart. Of all dietary changes, lowering your intake of these fats is the most important step you can take to reduce blood cholesterol.

Saturated fats

Saturated fats are found mainly in animal products (meat, skin on chicken and turkey, whole milk, cream, cheese), but can also be found in certain plant foods (coconut, palm oil, chocolate candy). Conch, a Bahamian favorite, is very low in saturated fat unless it is fried in the wrong type of oil.

Trans fats

Trans fats are “partly hydrogenated” vegetable oils used in commercially baked goods (cookies, crackers, cakes, chips) and by most restaurants and “fast-food” chains. French fries, onion rings, and doughnuts are usually made with trans fats. Trans fats are also found in most stick (but not liquid) margarines.

Heart-healthy fats

Monounsaturated fats are considered the most desirable. They are present in olive oil, canola oil, avocados, and in most nuts.

Tips to reduce blood cholesterol:

- make a list of changes you would like to make. Change one or two things at a time
- trim fat from meat. Remove skin from chicken and turkey
- work on increasing fruit and vegetable intake
- use 1% milk
- grate cheese and use sparingly as a garnish. Try low fat cheeses
- Reduce intake of fatty meats such as sausage, hot dog, bacon, salt beef, corned beef, ribs, mutton
- substitute fruits and low fat crackers (e.g. cream crackers) for potato chips and pastries
- reduce quantity of meat – substitute plant foods such as rice and vegetables
- bake, boil, or grill instead of frying food
- substitute olive oil and vinegar salad dressings for thick regular dressing
- use liquid or tub margarine

DIET FOR WEIGHT CONTROL

Consider this: If you eat 100 more food calories a day than you burn, you'll gain 1 pound in a month. That's about 10 pounds in a year. The bottom line is that to lose weight, it's important to reduce calories and increase physical activity. Weight management involves adopting a healthy lifestyle. Internal motivators such as health and increased energy improve your chances for lifelong weight management.

Do not make the scale the only measure of success. Success is whether or not you feel healthier mentally and physically, and losing body fat. If your clothes are fitting looser, but the scale does not drop, you may be gaining muscle and losing fat. Muscle weighs more than fat.

Choose daily healthy, reasonable changes for the long term rather than crash dieting. Avoid quick weight loss. Losing more than two pounds per week on a regular basis may cause you to lose muscle mass. A gradual weight loss of 1 – 2 pounds per week helps ensure that you are losing fat, not muscle.

Eating three meals per day helps boost your metabolism and prevents you from overeating because of being too hungry from skipping a meal. A food diary may make you become more aware of your food intake.

- Women, aim for 300 – 500 calories per meal.
- Men, aim for 400 – 600 calories per meal.

With a 100 – 200 calorie snack, you will limit yourself to a healthy 1200 – 1500 calories for women, 1500 – 1800 calories for men.

You can lose weight simply by choosing more foods that are high in water and fiber (low energy-density) such as fruits, vegetables, and whole grains. Having a large portion of low energy-dense foods, like vegetable soup or salad, before meals is an effective strategy for weight control; it increases satisfaction and provides a sense of “fullness” with very few calories, and thus can reduce your calorie intake for the entire meal. A vegetable based soup or salad as a first course increases fullness for very few calories, and thus can reduce your calorie intake for the entire meal.

Many people think they must eliminate rice from their diet in order to lose weight. To the contrary, a healthy weight loss plan is plant-based. Include complex carbohydrate like whole wheat bread, rice, legumes (such as pigeon peas), and potato. Complement your diet with small portions of meat, fish, or poultry. Include low fat or nonfat dairy products such as skim or 1% milk or low fat yogurt.

Work on 1 or 2 changes at a time to create healthier habits for long term results. For instance, if you eat too fast or eat while watching TV, you may find it helpful to train yourself to eat slower and enjoy your food more by minimizing distractions during meals. When you eat slowly and are not distracted, you are more likely to recognize when you are full. It's a natural way to eat less.

DIET FOR DIABETES MANAGEMENT

Eating healthy foods and keeping a healthy body weight are considered to be the cornerstone of diabetes management. A healthy diet and weight helps to keep your blood sugar under control which helps to protect against the long term problems of diabetes.

You do not need to purchase foods labeled “dietetic”. Foods that are good for you are good for the rest of your household. The following guidelines will help you change the way you eat and help keep your blood sugar under control.

Carbohydrate is the main type of food that raises blood sugar. The amount of carbohydrate you eat at each meal will determine how high your blood sugar goes after the meal. It is very important to consume carbohydrate, but in controlled portions. Carbohydrate is found in many foods and beverages including:

- starches (bread, rice, potato, grits, cereals)
- milk
- fruit and 100% fruit juice
- sweets (candy, fruit punch, coconut water, regular sodas, including gingerale)

Most people with diabetes benefit from eating 3 small meals and 2 – 3 small snacks per day. This may vary depending on the type of diabetes and medications you are taking. An individualized meal plan helps control blood sugar levels by matching the food you eat with the diabetes medication you take. A dietitian can help you plan your meals.

Eat high fibre foods. Include a variety of foods each day including fruits, vegetables, whole grains, low-fat dairy products, and lean meats, fish and poultry (remove skin).

Avoid excessive sugar such as found in candy, pastries, jelly, syrups, sweetened condensed milk, chocolate milk, white sugar, brown sugar, honey, and sugar-coated cereals.

Reading food labels and looking for words that end in “ose” can help you identify forms of sugar. If sugar is listed as one of the first three ingredients, or if several forms of sugar are listed, it is probably best to avoid it. One teaspoon of sugar is 5 grams. Most sweet tasting beverages contain about 150 gm of sugar in just 12 ounces, or about 10 teaspoons of sugar. Fruit juices (100% juice) are naturally sweet because of the sugar “fructose”, and should be used in moderation only. The best thirst-quenching beverage is water, followed by other sugar-free drinks. Artificial sweeteners such as saccharine, Equal® and Splenda® may be used.

Limiting the total fat in your diet will help control your weight and cholesterol levels. Avoid fried foods, high fat meats (e.g. sausage, corned beef, ribs, mutton), whole dairy products, cheese, and high fat desserts (e.g. ice cream, pastry).

Limiting sodium can help control heart disease associated with diabetes.

If you choose to drink alcohol, limit the amount and have it with a meal. Check with your health professional about a safe amount for you.

DIET FOR KIDNEY DISEASE

Nutrition management of kidney disease is an important component of medical treatment. The diet for patients with kidney disease includes individually tailoring dietary protein, and certain other nutrients to help slow or prevent progression of illness. The following nutrients are especially important for persons with kidney disease:

- **Calories** are present in carbohydrates, proteins, and fats. It is important to eat a certain amount of calories every day to give you energy and maintain your body weight. If your appetite is poor and you do not eat enough, your fat and muscle tissue will be burned for energy. Your dietitian can help modify your diet to help you get the calories you need.
- **Protein** comes from both animal and plant foods. Protein helps keep your body tissue healthy and helps repair tissues that may be damaged. Insufficient protein may cause muscle loss. Excess protein may cause fatigue. It is important to eat the right amount and type of protein.
- **Sodium** is found mainly in table salt and in processed or convenience foods. Sodium restrictions may help control thirst, blood pressure, and prevent water retention. It will take some time for your taste buds to adjust to the new flavour of a low sodium diet. However, in time, your taste for salt may disappear. Try adding lime, pepper, and spices to foods to enhance flavour.
- **Phosphorus** comes mainly from animal foods, especially dairy products. Some plant foods are rich in phosphorus such as dried beans and peas, nuts, and cola. Because the kidneys help control the amount of phosphorus in your body, kidney disease results in imbalance. Your doctor may prescribe a “phosphate binder” for you to take with meals to help control the level of phosphorus in your blood.
- **Calcium** is found mainly in dairy products. Because you may need to limit the amount of phosphorus you eat, your intake of dairy products may be low. Your doctor may recommend a calcium supplement to keep your bones healthy.
- **Potassium** is a mineral that helps muscles and nerves work the right way. Healthy kidneys keep the right balance of potassium in the blood. Damaged kidneys may not be able to get rid of potassium well enough. The dietary recommendation for potassium is based on the degree of kidney disease, form of treatment and blood levels of potassium. High potassium foods include certain fruits and vegetables including bananas, oranges, cantaloupe, tomatoes, baked potato, sweet potato, and okra. If your doctor has prescribed a low potassium diet, our dietitian will guide you in making the right food choices.

Disclaimer: This pamphlet contains general information on diet and health. It is not meant to be a substitute for the advice provided by a physician or other medical professional. This information should not be used for diagnosing a health problem or disease.