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FLUIDS AND FLUID MANAGEMENT

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Fluids And Fluid Management

Limiting fluids

Some patients with heart failure need to limit the fluids they take in. Ask your doctor if you need to limit your fluids and how much you can have each day. Record the limit below, near the measuring charts.

Tracking fluids

At first, it is important to keep track of all fluids you have each day so you don't go over your limit. You may find it helpful to write the information on a tracking sheet or calendar. You may also want to keep track of the information electronically, such as with an app on your phone. Keep a daily log until you are able to keep track of fluids without measuring.

You may find it helpful to track your fluids by filling up a bottle or pitcher with the same amount of water as your daily fluid limit (for example: 64 oz or 2,000 ml). Keep the container handy, and every time you have a fluid, empty the same amount of water out of the bottle. When the container is empty, you have reached your daily fluid limit.

Measuring fluids

Fluids can be measured in different ways. The charts below list conversions for fluid measurements and some samples. Some foods are considered fluids, including pudding, cow gelatin, all soups (thick or thin), Popsicles and ice cream. If you have any questions about fluids, please ask a member of your healthcare team.

Fluid Measurement
1 ml = 1 ml

1 oz = 30ml
1 cup = 8oz = 240ml
4 cups = 32oz = 1 quart = 1,000ml

My daily fluid limit is _____ cups = _____ ml each day.

Common Sized for Fluids	How many mls?
Coffee cup	200ml
Drinking glass (8oz)	240ml
Milk carton (8oz)	240ml
Small milk carton (4oz)	120ml
Juice, cow gelatin or ice cream cup (4oz)	120ml
Soup bowl	160ml
Half a Popsicle	40ml

What if I get thirsty?

Being thirsty does not always mean your body needs more fluid. Be careful NOT to replace fluids that diuretics (“water pills”) help your body get rid of. Try these tricks if you get thirsty:

- Snack on frozen grapes or strawberries
- Chew sugar-free gum or suck on hard candy
- Suck on ice chips (not ice cubes) or a washcloth soaked in ice water
- Avoid milk, ice cream and salt (sodium) as they can make you thirsty
- Use lip balm or petroleum jelly (Vaseline) to keep your lips moist

If you sweat a lot or are outdoors in hot weather, make sure you do not become dehydrated.

Signs of dehydration/not taking in enough fluids are:

- Dark (concentrated) urine
- Fast heartbeat
- Feeling dizzy when you move around
- Very dry mouth and tongue
- Feeling faint

If you have signs of dehydration, have one or more extra cups of water or other fluid.

Managing shortness of breath caused by extra fluid

If you have extra fluid in your body, you may feel like you can't catch your breath.

If your shortness of breath is a new symptom or if it is worse than it has been, call your doctor or nurse. The following tips can help you get rid of extra fluid and breathe more easily.

Limit sodium and fluids

- Reduce the amount of sodium in your diet for 2 days. For example, if you normally have about 2,400 mg of sodium each day, limit your sodium to about 2,000mg per day.
- Reduce the amount of fluids you have for 2 days. For example, if you normally have 8 cups (2000ml) of fluids each day, reduce your fluid intake to 6 cups (1440ml) per day.
- If you reduce your sodium and fluids for 2 days and are still short of breath, call your doctor.

Try Changing Positions

- If you are short of breath at night, use pillows or a cushion so you are more upright. You may also try sleeping in a reclining chair. Tell your doctor or nurse if you need extra pillows or need to sleep in a chair.

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