THE HEART FAILURE PATIENT FOUNDATION

# Patient Tip Sheet

## READING FOOD LABELS




**Reading Food Labels**

Food labels give important information that can help you choose low sodium foods.

Tips for Reading Labels:

- Serving Size – In this example one (1) cup is the serving size. The container holds 4 servings. Remember if you eat the double serving listed, you will double the salt, calories and fat. If you eat one half the serving size listed, the salt and calories should be halved.
- Salt is listed as "sodium" on the Nutrition Facts Label. This food item has 850mg of sodium in 1 cup serving. NOTE: Try to keep the sodium or salt in mg to 300 mg or less.
- % of Daily Value. Lists the Percentage Daily Value (% DV) in one serving of food based upon 2000 – 2500 calories consumed each day.
- It is easier to ignore the % daily value and focus on the amount of mg sodium per serving
- Keeping the total amount of sodium you consume to 2,000 milligrams (mg)-3,000 milligrams (mg) per day is one of the most important ways to manage heart failure
- A general rule to follow:
  - "Low sodium"=140 mg or less per serving
  - "No sodium"=less than 5 mg per serving

**Recommendation:**

- Limit sodium (salt) to 2,000 -3,000 mg (2-3 grams) per day
- Best to keep under 200-300 mg of sodium (salt) per serving
- Try to avoid foods with more than 400 mg of potassium
- Read food labels carefully looking for salt, sodium, sodium chloride, monosodium glutamate (MSG), brine, broth, corned or pickled

**References:**


- U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA). The Nutrition Facts Label. Daily Values and using %DV. https://www.fda.gov/food/nutrition-facts-label/how-understand-and-use-nutrition-facts-label
- FDA. Daily Value for Sodium (2,300 mg) and Potassium (4,700 mg) in Nutrition Facts labeling (Final Rule, 2016; compliance 2020–2021). https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2016/05/27/2016-11867/food-labeling-revision-of-the-nutrition-and-supplement-facts-labels
- Heidenreich PA, Bozkurt B, Aguilar D, et al. 2022 AHA/ACC/HFSA Guideline for the Management of Heart Failure. Circulation. 2022;145:e895–e1032.
- FDA. Sodium in Your Diet. https://www.fda.gov/food/nutrition-education-resources-materials/sodium-your-diet
- National Institutes of Health (NIH) Office of Dietary Supplements. Potassium Fact Sheet for Health Professionals (for context on potassium, meds, kidney disease). https://ods.od.nih.gov/factsheets/Potassium-Consumer/