Living with Cirrhosis
Thank you for choosing the The Ohio State University Wexner Medical Center for your health care. Our team of doctors, nurses and staff work together to help you, our patients and families, to find ways to manage this health condition.

Cirrhosis is a chronic condition, meaning it can last a long time. Every day you need to make choices to protect your liver. There is no cure for cirrhosis, and we want your liver to work as well as it can. We want you to have a good quality of life. Follow this plan for your liver and health:

- **Eat a very low sodium diet or less than 2,000 milligrams a day.**
- **Take your medicines every day, even if you feel well.**
- **Avoid taking any NSAIDs (nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs), such as ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin) and naproxen (Aleve).** Limit acetaminophen (Tylenol) to no more than 2,000 mg per day.
- **Avoid alcohol, recreational drugs and herbal supplements** to reduce the risk of more damage.

Ask your family and friends to support these behaviors. Ask questions and share your concerns with us. We want you to have good liver health.

Sincerely,

Your Ohio State Hepatology Team

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**Contact Information**

Gastroenterology, Hepatology & Nutrition Division:
(614) 293-6255
Fax (614) 293-8518

University Hospital:
(614) 293-8000

East Hospital:
(614) 257-3000

Outpatient Nutrition:
(614) 293-3433

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Talk to your doctor or health care team if you have any questions about your care.

For more health information, go to patienteducation.osumc.edu or contact the Library for Health Information at 614-293-3707 or health-info@osu.edu.

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About Your Liver

The adult liver weighs about 2 to 4 pounds. It lies in the right side of the upper abdomen next to the stomach. The rib cage covers most of the liver except that area just below the breast bone. Underneath the liver sits the stomach, large intestine, the right kidney and the gallbladder.

The liver works to:

• Fight infections by destroying germs called bacteria in the blood.
• Remove or change hormones, drugs, chemicals and toxins (ammonia) that enter or are already in your body.
• Store and use vitamins including A, D, E, K and B₁₂
• Make and store substances that help clot blood.
• Store nutrients until the body needs them for energy.
• Produce bile which helps digest food.
Understanding Cirrhosis of the Liver

With cirrhosis, the liver becomes injured and scarred over time. The scar tissue blocks the flow of blood through the liver. This blockage causes the liver to be slow in breaking down food products, hormones, medicine and waste products in the body. It also slows the liver’s ability to make proteins and other substances.

Causes of cirrhosis

- Alcoholism
- Chronic hepatitis (type B and C are more common)
- Non-Alcoholic Fatty Liver Disease (NAFLD) which is related to insulin resistance and diabetes
- Inherited diseases, such as Wilson’s disease, alpha-1 anti-trypsin (AAT) deficiency Auto-immune disorders:
  - Primary biliary cirrhosis (PBC)
  - Primary Sclerosing Cholangitis (PSC)
  - Auto-immune hepatitis
- Reactions to prescribed medicines and exposure to environmental toxins are less common causes
- Heart failure with liver involvement
- Hemochromatosis

Later signs of this disease include:

- **Pruritus** - Itchy skin.
- **Jaundice** - Yellowing of your skin caused by too much bilirubin in your blood.
- **Ascites** - Swelling in the abdomen due to a buildup of fluid. If your protein is low in your blood vessels, fluid can leak into your belly to cause ascites.
- **Hepatic encephalopathy (HE)** - Changes in alertness, confusion, forgetfulness, problems concentrating or increased sleepiness. Increased amounts of ammonia in your body can cause these changes in thinking. If you have HE, avoid use of opioid or narcotic pain medicines, sleeping pills and anti-anxiety medicines.
- **Varices** - Swollen blood vessels in the stomach or esophagus. May have black tarry stools or vomit blood if these vessels bleed. Sometimes the bleeding is severe and can be life-threatening.

Signs of cirrhosis

Some people have no signs or early signs may be vague. Signs may include:

- **Feeling tired or weak.**
- **Loss of appetite, nausea and weight loss.**
- **Portal hypertension** - High blood pressure in the portal vein system that carries blood from the digestive organs to the liver.

If you have new signs or your signs get worse, call your health care provider at (614) 293-6255.
Testing for cirrhosis

Talk with your doctor about the signs you have during your exam. One or more of these tests may also be done:

- **Blood tests** to check how your liver is working.
- **Abdominal CT (computerized tomography) scan** may be used to check the liver. This scan allows your doctor to see pictures of thin slices of your abdominal organs.
- **Magnetic resonance imaging (MRI)** that uses radio waves in a magnetic field to check bones and soft tissue, such as the liver.
- **Ultrasound** of the liver that uses sound waves to create pictures of the liver to check how well the liver works.
- **Liver biopsy** where a needle is put through the skin to take a sample of the liver tissue to check liver function.

**My MELD score is ________**

Model for End-stage Liver Disease (MELD) score is a useful tool for both you and your health care team. It is a numbered scale that estimates how well your liver is working. With cirrhosis, the function of the liver can change constantly, even every day. These changes are seen in your blood work that is used to find your MELD score.

The scores range from 6, which means the liver is working well, to 40, which means the liver is working poorly. The number is calculated by a formula using 3 routine lab test results:

- **Bilirubin**: Measures how well your liver gets rid of bile, a fluid produced in the liver that helps with absorption and digestion.
- **INR**: Measures your liver’s ability to make blood clotting factors.
- **Creatinine**: Measures kidney function because kidney function is often affected by liver disease.

Your MELD score is helpful to manage your care, such as when to do certain procedures or when to consider referral for liver transplant.

If you want to figure out your MELD score, you can link to a MELD calculator at go.osu.edu/MELD.

Testing for liver cancer

Cirrhosis can increase the chance of cancer in the liver called **hepatocellular carcinoma (HCC)**. Your doctor will order tests to check for HCC every 6 months. Tests may include abdominal MRI, CT scan or ultrasound.
Treating Cirrhosis

Based on your needs
You and your doctor will talk about your treatment options. These may include:

- **Limit salt to no more than 2,000 mg each day and eat smaller, more frequent meals.** Read more about diet changes in the next pages of this book.

- **Endoscopy to find and treat swollen blood vessels (varices) in the stomach or esophagus.** A thin, flexible tube with a light and a camera is put into your mouth, through your food tube and into your stomach for this procedure. Small bands may be place during this procedure on swollen blood vessels to stop blood flow and prevent bleeding. This is called variceal banding.

- **Paracentesis to remove fluid from your belly if you have ascites.** The doctor will guide a needle into your belly to drain fluid, using an ultrasound machine to avoid your organs. The fluid can be removed to help ease discomfort and make breathing easier.

- **Liver transplant** may be needed if the cirrhosis is not controlled with other treatments or if the liver stops working.

Common medicines
Your doctor may order medicines, such as:

- **Diuretics**, also known as water pills, to help reduce fluid in your belly and legs through increased urination. This group includes:
  - Spironolactone (Aldactone)
  - Furosemide (Lasix)

These medicines reduce extra fluid in your body and work together to help keep your potassium level from going too low.

- **Lactulose** to help your body to get rid of ammonia by increasing the number of bowel movements. Increased ammonia can cause changes in thinking and confusion. Lactulose should be adjusted, so you have 3 to 4 bowel movements each day.

- **Rifaximin** (Xifaxan) with Lactulose to reduce changes in thinking or confusion.

Your doctor may order other medicines to:

- Reduce signs of cirrhosis.
- Limit further liver injury.
- Reduce viral hepatitis in the body.
Eating Tips

A healthy liver breaks down foods into many usable parts. It makes fuel for your body from carbohydrates and fat. It makes protein for building muscles and healing, and stores and activates vitamins and minerals. The liver also breaks down waste products your body makes. When the liver is stressed or scarred from cirrhosis, it has to work harder to do these jobs.

Making changes to your diet can help your liver and the rest of your body work better. Talk to your doctor or dietitian if you have any questions about your diet.

Eat smaller amounts of food more often.

If you have fluid in your abdomen, it may be hard for you to eat enough food because of an early feeling of fullness. Poor appetite is also related to this. Here are some tips to help your body get the nutrition it needs:

- **Eat smaller meals more often throughout the day.** Turn 3 large meals into 6 small meals spaced every 2 to 4 hours throughout the day.
- You may be hungry at breakfast but not later in the day. **Be careful not to over-eat at breakfast,** so you are able to eat a few hours later.
- **Separate your liquids from your meals by about 30 minutes.**
- **Sip on higher calorie beverages between meals, such as liquid oral supplements.** Ask your dietitian to help you pick the best one for you.
- **Always have a bedtime snack with a protein and carbohydrate.** For example, have a peanut butter and jelly sandwich or milk and graham crackers.

Eat protein throughout the day to help your body clear waste products.

Hepatic encephalopathy (HE) is the loss of brain function that occurs when the liver is unable to remove toxins from the blood. Higher protein intake can cause less confusion and clearer thinking if you have HE. Small, frequent sources of protein can help your body handle the waste products more easily.

To get enough protein in your diet:

- **Eat animal sources of protein,** such as milk, eggs, fresh cooked meat and seafood.
- **Eat vegetable sources of protein,** such as unsalted nuts, seeds and soy products. These may be easier for your body to process.
- **Increase protein in creamy food items with skim milk powder or other allowed protein supplements.** Discuss this with your dietitian.
Limiting Sodium or Salt

Salt is a mineral, called sodium chloride, and it occurs naturally in the soil. Most foods have a low level of natural salt before any salt is added in cooking or for seasoning. When your body has too much sodium, fluid in the body builds up. Extra fluid increases the work of your heart and kidneys and can increase blood pressure. Some health conditions, like cirrhosis, are greatly affected by this extra fluid. Eating less sodium may help control these problems.

Small changes can reduce overall sodium totals

Choosing carrots with low salt hummus over pretzels saves salt. Even small amounts of salt can be a lot for your body on a low salt diet:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Amount</th>
<th>Milligrams</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1/4 teaspoon</td>
<td>600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/3 teaspoon</td>
<td>900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/2 teaspoon</td>
<td>1200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/4 teaspoon</td>
<td>1800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 teaspoon</td>
<td>2300</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Read nutrition labels

This nutrition label shows how quickly salt adds up in your diet:

- This package has 2 servings. Each serving has 660 mg of sodium.
- If you ate the entire package, that is 1320 mg of sodium.
- To stay with your low sodium diet, find another product with less sodium in it or cook at home where the amount of salt can be controlled.

Source: National Institutes of Health, National Kidney Education Program.
What sodium labels mean

Look for these labels when shopping or eating out:

- **Sodium free**: less than 5 mg/serving
- **Very low sodium**: 35 mg or less/serving
- **Low sodium**: 140 mg or less/serving
- **Reduced sodium**: It has 25% less salt than the original product. These products still may have high levels of sodium in them.
- **Light in sodium or lightly salted**: It has at least 50% less sodium than the regular product.
- **Unsalted, no salt added or without salt added**: It is made without added salt, but there may be natural salt or sodium in the product.

Be careful with salt substitutes

Many salt substitutes have high amounts of potassium. Ask your provider if you can use a salt substitute or if you need to be "salt free". Many products called lite salts still have too much sodium for a low sodium diet.

Finding hidden salt

Nutrition labels may have other names for salt. Look for these terms for salt:

- Any term with the word salt or sodium, such as regular table salt, sea salt or kosher salt.
- Natural types of salt, such as Himalayan pink, Celtic or refined salts. They may have a different taste and texture, but are still salt.
- Products with salt in them, such as garlic salt, onion salt or celery salt.
- Meat tenderizers or seasoning salts, including monosodium glutamate or MSG.

More terms for salt on food labels:

- sodium alginate
- sodium ascorbate
- disodium phosphate
- sodium benzoate
- sodium bicarbonate (baking powder or baking soda)
- sodium citrate
- sodium sulfite
- potassium bicarbonate
- potassium citrate
- trisodium phosphate
Eating well on a low sodium diet

Planning meals and portions may take a little time at first, but you can eat most foods and reduce your sodium to healthy levels.

Very low sodium diet menus

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sodium by meal</th>
<th>1,500 mg sodium menu</th>
<th>Sodium by meal</th>
<th>2,000 mg sodium menu</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Breakfast</strong></td>
<td>488 mg</td>
<td><strong>Breakfast</strong></td>
<td>500 mg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 cup (8 oz) milk--110 mg</td>
<td>1 cup (8 oz) coffee/tea--5 mg</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4 oz orange juice--2 mg</td>
<td>1 cup (8 oz) milk--110 mg</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 hard boiled or 1 fried egg in (1 tsp. canola/olive oil)--70 mg</td>
<td>1 cup frosted shredded wheat squares cereal--10 mg</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2 slices (2 oz) whole grain toast--235 mg</td>
<td>1 poached egg--70 mg</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 teaspoon margarine and jelly--35 mg</td>
<td>2 pieces of whole grain toast--235 mg</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 medium banana--1 mg</td>
<td>2 teaspoon butter and jelly--70 mg</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lunch</strong></td>
<td>595 mg</td>
<td><strong>Lunch</strong></td>
<td>701 mg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 cup (8 oz) water</td>
<td>12 oz can lemon/lime soda--40 mg</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 grilled chicken sandwich with 4 ounces grilled chicken, with 1 Tablespoon (Tbsp) of mayonnaise, lettuce and tomato--150 mg</td>
<td>2 slices (2 oz) whole grain bread--235 mg</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 whole wheat roll--250 mg</td>
<td>3 ounces low-sodium turkey plus 1/2 cup avocado--425 mg</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1/2 cup carrot sticks with 2 Tbsp ranch dressing--195 mg</td>
<td>1 medium apple--1 mg</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 medium apple--1 mg</td>
<td><strong>Snack</strong></td>
<td>50 mg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 cup (8 oz) water</td>
<td>1 cup (8 oz) iced tea, unsweetened with lemon--6 mg</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4 cups unsalted popcorn--60 mg</td>
<td>8 unsalted crackers--40 mg</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 cup fruit cocktail--10 mg</td>
<td>1 stick low sodium mozzarella cheese--4 mg</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dinner</strong></td>
<td>270 mg</td>
<td><strong>Dinner</strong></td>
<td>583 mg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 cup (8 oz) milk--110 mg</td>
<td>1 cup (8 oz) water</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5 ounces lean beef--105 mg</td>
<td>1 cup low sodium condensed tomato soup, plus 1 cup low fat milk--170 mg</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 medium baked potato--5 mg</td>
<td>5 oz pork chop with 2 tsp olive oil and salt-free herbs--235 mg</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 cup steamed broccoli (fresh or frozen) with 2 tsp olive oil, lemon and salt free herbs--40 mg</td>
<td>1 cup mashed potatoes, dehydrated with milk--164 mg</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1/2 cup fresh peaches--10 mg</td>
<td>1/2 cup steamed corn and 1/2 cup steamed green beans (fresh or frozen) salt free herbs--7 mg</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Snack</strong></td>
<td><strong>Snack</strong></td>
<td>145 mg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>105 mg</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 cup (8 oz) tea--5 mg</td>
<td>1 cup (8 oz) water</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 cup (8 oz) ice cream--100 mg</td>
<td>1 apple--2 mg</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sodium total</strong></td>
<td>1,488 mg</td>
<td><strong>Sodium total</strong></td>
<td>1,979 mg</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
10 Ways to Lower Salt in Your Diet

How to make a low salt diet work for YOU

1. Limit processed foods. Most processed foods, such as chips, cookies, canned soups, tomato sauces, lunch meat and frozen meals have a lot of added salt and sugar. Choose fresh fruits and vegetables, low-sodium whole grains and low-sodium cheeses as snacks.

2. Plan for salt across your daily meals and snacks. Plan for 3 meals and 2 snacks a day. Start with a low-salt commercial cereal or no-salt cooked cereal at breakfast. Choose low salt bread or crackers at lunch. Instead of processed meat, cook your own meat at home and use it for a sandwich. Add lettuce and tomato for flavor, instead of condiments. Use herbs and grilled vegetables with chicken for dinner.

3. Read nutrition labels to guide your food choices. Choose sodium free, very low sodium or low sodium products. Make healthy choices when food shopping, such as:
   - Cheese with less than 80 mg sodium per ounce.
   - Breads with less than 100 mg sodium per slice.
   - Soups with less than 100 mg sodium per ounce.

4. Buy fresh or frozen foods instead of canned. Choose fresh foods when you can or go for frozen without any added sauces. If using canned foods, drain and rinse foods to reduce salt. Rinsing beans, tuna and canned vegetables before using them does remove some, but not all of the salt. Avoid canned, smoked or processed meats, such as bacon, sausage, pre-packaged lunch meat or products where salt or saline is added.

5. Eat more fruits and vegetables. Add them to salads, main dishes, side dishes or eat them plain. Fruits and vegetables help your body to remove water and avoid fluid build-up. They are also low calorie and naturally low in salt.
6. **Learn to enjoy the natural taste of food.** Many foods are so processed that we have to learn to get used to foods with less salt. It is about changing both how food is prepared and change our taste to enjoy food with spices other than salt. Try to cook meat at home and add unsalted nuts or seeds, lentils, unsalted or low-sodium broth, and herbs or spices. Use the cooking process, such as grilling, poaching and baking, to add taste and flavor. Taste food as you cook to know what each food item adds to a dish.

7. **Create low sodium condiments.** Make your own low salt salad dressing, dip, gravy or sauce. Most commercial or packaged products are high in sodium. If you choose the low salt or no salt options, you may be able to have more. Otherwise, limit these ingredients:
   - Salted butter or margarine, 4 Tablespoons a day
   - Mayonnaise, 2 Tablespoons a day
   - Sour cream, 2 ounces (1/4 cup) a day
   - Ketchup or mustard, 1 Tablespoon a day
   - Regular salad dressing, 2 teaspoons a day
   - Canned tomato paste, 1/4 cup a day
   - Regular tomato sauce, 1/2 cup a day

8. **Choose low salt or salt-free beverages. Save salt for the food you eat.** Water, coffee, tea, carbonated seltzer water and fruit juices have very low or no salt in them. Limit milk to 2 cups of low fat milk a day. Avoid energy and sport drinks, commercially made milkshakes and instant cocoa that have added salt.

9. **Ask restaurants for low salt substitutions.** Ask wait staff or the chef how food is prepared. Choose foods made to order or low-salt preparations. Have sauce or dressings on the side where you control the amount used. Choose grilled, broiled, baked, boiled or steamed foods instead of fried. Avoid casseroles where there may be hidden salt, based on the ingredients used.

10. **Check over the counter and non-prescription drugs and supplements for salt.** Many antacids, laxatives, aspirin and cough medicines have salt or sodium. Many mouthwashes also have sodium. Ask your doctor or pharmacist for help before you buy these products and check product labels.
Food Lists for a Very Low Sodium Diet

Foods to choose

1. Breads and cereals:
   - Up to 4 pieces of low-sodium bread, choose whole-grain or enriched white, wheat, rye or Italian breads, English muffins, corn or low sodium flour tortilla, or low salt muffin.
   - Plain rolls, hamburger or hot dog buns can substitute for a slice of bread.
   - Dry cereals with less than 100 mg/serving, such as shredded wheat, puffed wheat or puffed rice.
   - Cooked cereals, such as oatmeal, without salt.

2. Meats, fish, eggs and poultry:
   - 6 ounces of lean beef, chicken, Cornish hen, duck, goose, lamb, turkey, veal, fish or pork.
   - All eggs or egg substitutes.
   - Low sodium canned tuna or salmon.
   - Processed meats, such as lunch meat, less than 100 mg/ounce.

3. Fruits:
   - All fruits, fresh, frozen or canned.

4. Vegetables:
   - All vegetables, fresh, frozen or canned, EXCEPT pickles, sauerkraut or vegetables prepared in salt water, vegetables in sauces and gravies, or regular salt vegetable juices.
   - If canned, choose low-salt, drain well and rinse.
   - Choose low sodium tomato sauce or tomato juice.

5. Legumes, including dried peas and beans, peanut butter:
   - All legumes, cooked in unsalted water or low-salt broth.
   - If canned, rinse with water and drain.
   - If prepackaged, cook without the seasoning packet and season separately.
   - Choose unsalted peanut butter or other unsalted nut butter, such as almond.

Foods to avoid

1. Bread/cereal:
   - Instant cooked cereals.
   - Cereals with more than 100 mg/serving.
   - Commercial bread mixes, for biscuits, corn bread, muffins.
   - Regular or frozen pastries, muffins, waffles, biscuits with high sodium/serving.
   - Products with self-rising flour.

2. Meats/fish/eggs/poultry:
   - Most salted, smoked, canned or cured meats, such as ham, bacon, sausage, hot dogs, or pre-packaged lunch meats.
   - Commercial breaded meats, fish, poultry.
   - Shellfish, such as clam, crab, lobster, oyster and scallops.
   - Soybean extenders.

3. Legumes/dried beans/peanut butter:
   - Beans or peas with bacon, ham, salt pork.
   - Regular peanut butter.

4. Potatoes/pasta/rice:
   - Macaroni/cheese mix.
   - Instant potatoes.
   - Rice/noodle mixes.
Foods to choose

6. Potatoes, pasta, rice and starch:
   • Any type of potatoes, pasta, white or brown rice or other starch cooked in unsalted water.

7. Milk, yogurt, cheese:
   • Up to 2 cups of low-fat milk (2%, 1% or skim) a day.
   • Most yogurt, regular, Greek or low-fat.
   • Low sodium cheese, less than 80 mg/ounce.
   • Limit cream or sour cream to 2 ounces or 1/4 cup/day.
   • Low-sodium Ice cream, frozen yogurt, sherbet, fruit bars, or non-dairy alternatives (soy or rice milk).

8. Frozen dinners:
   • Choose only those with less than 600 mg per serving and only have 1 frozen meal per day.

9. Soups:
   • Unsalted homemade soups.
   • Low-sodium or no salt added soups.

10. Snack foods:
    • Unsalted snack chips, such as corn chips, tortilla chips, pretzels, potato chips or popcorn.
    • Unsalted nuts, such as almonds, pecans or walnuts.
    • Unsalted peanut butter/nut butter.
    • Salsa made with low salt or no salt added tomatoes.

11. Fats:
    • Vegetable oils or shortening or unsalted butter/margarine.
    • Homemade salad dressings, gravy, sauce with no added salt and allowed ingredients.
    • Limit regular salted butter/margarine to 4 teaspoons/day.
    • Limit regular mayonnaise to 2 Tablespoons/day.

12. Desserts and sweets:
    • One serving of dessert per day unless told differently by provider.
    • Salt-free desserts, such as cake cookies, donuts, brownies made with allowed ingredients.
    • Ice cream, sherbet, pudding, gelatin, foods made with honey, jam, preserves, marshmallows, corn/maple syrup, plain hard or soft candies, such as jelly beans, lemon drops and mints.

Foods to avoid

5. Milk/yogurt/cheese:
   • Regular cottage cheese, ricotta.
   • Buttermilk.
   • Processed cheese or cheese spread.
   • Aged cheese, such as Parmesan, blue cheese, cheddar, Edam, colby, Romano.

6. Frozen dinners:
   • Most frozen meals.

7. Soups:
   • Regular canned soups, dried, instant mixes.
   • Frozen soups.
   • Regular broth, bouillon, consommé.
   • Homemade soups with ham or ham bones, bacon, salt fish, salted meat.

8. Snack foods:
   • Regular salted snack chips.
   • Prepared dips, spreads.

9. Fats:
   • Commercial salad dressings, mixes, sauces, gravies.

10. Desserts:
    • Molasses, regular salted nuts or peanut butter, licorice.
Focus on good seasoning choices, such as fruits, vegetables and herbs, for great tasting meals. **Avoid most salt substitutes unless it is Mrs. Dash or approved by your provider. Avoid most lite salts as they have too much sodium for a very low sodium diet.** Many salt substitutes have potassium chloride instead of sodium, and this can cause medical problems.

### Choose these products

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Allspice</th>
<th>Lemon/limes, juice or lime zest</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Basil</td>
<td>Low salt ketchup (limit 1 - 2 Tbsp)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bay leaves</td>
<td>Marjoram</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cayenne pepper or red pepper flakes</td>
<td>Mint or mint jelly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Celery pepper</td>
<td>Mustard, limit 1 tsp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chili powder</td>
<td>Nutmeg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cinnamon</td>
<td>Onion powder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cloves</td>
<td>Oregano</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cocoa powder</td>
<td>Paprika</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cumin</td>
<td>Parsley</td>
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<tr>
<td>Curry</td>
<td>Pepper--white, black, lemon pepper</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dill</td>
<td>Rosemary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dry mustard</td>
<td>Sage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flavored extracts: vanilla, almond, mint, hazelnut</td>
<td>Seasoning blends without salt, such as Mrs. Dash</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Garlic</td>
<td>Thyme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ginger</td>
<td>Tomato sauce or paste (low sodium or no salt)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Horseradish</td>
<td>Unsweetened applesauce</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Avoid/limit these products

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Alfredo mixes</th>
<th>Pickle relish</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Barbecue mixes</td>
<td>Plum sauce</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bouillon cubes or canned broth</td>
<td>Pickling (packaged) mix</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baking soda and baking powder</td>
<td>Poultry seasoning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Celery salt</td>
<td>Regular ketchup</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooking wine or cooking sherry</td>
<td>Salt--sea salt, salt sense, most salt substitutes, lite salt or other seasonings that have salt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dry meat marinades or mix</td>
<td>Soy sauce</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dressing (salad) mixes or packets</td>
<td>Steak sauce</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dry instant soup mixes</td>
<td>Stir fry sauces</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fish sauce</td>
<td>Stock (canned beef, chicken or vegetable)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Garlic salt</td>
<td>Taco seasonings or taco sauce</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gravy mixes</td>
<td>Tomato sauce (regular)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kosher salt</td>
<td>Teriyaki sauce</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meat tenderizer</td>
<td>Vegetable juices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monosodium glutamate (MSG)</td>
<td>Worcestershire sauce</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Onion salt</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>