

HEART FAILURE AND A HEALTHY DIET

JOHN MUIR HEALTH

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INTRODUCTION

Foods low in saturated fat, cholesterol and sodium are good for the heart and overall health. This section will focus on a low sodium diet but you should also eat an overall heart healthy diet.

Sodium is a mineral that is necessary in small amounts for many body functions. We consume most of our sodium in the form of salt, which is made up of sodium and chloride.

High sodium levels cause the body to retain fluid, which increases the heart's workload. Fluid retention can make heart failure worse and may cause symptoms such as difficulty breathing, swelling of the ankles, feet or abdomen and weight gain. Too much sodium can contribute to high blood pressure.

Sodium is added during the processing of foods for flavor or for preservation, and you are likely eating more than you think. High sodium foods include cheese, lunch meat,

highly processed breads and cereals, prepared items like canned and frozen foods and baked goods.

A low sodium diet can help you, even if you do not have symptoms of fluid build up, or if you are already taking a diuretic (water pill). To reduce sodium it will be necessary to get rid of the salt shaker, eat fresh foods and read labels.

It may take some time to adjust to a low sodium diet, but it is worth the effort. A low sodium diet can help you feel better and allow your heart failure medicines to work more effectively.

For overall good health choose foods that are low in sodium, cholesterol and saturated fat (fat from meat, poultry, eggs and dairy). Eat more fiber from whole grains, fruit, vegetables and legumes (beans and lentils). Eat well and feel well!

HEART FAILURE AND A HEALTHY DIET

WHAT IS A LOW SALT DIET?

- One teaspoon of table salt has 2,400 mg (2.4 grams) of sodium. This is more than any one person should have each day.
- The recommendation for the average American is to eat 2,300 mg or less of sodium each day.
- People with mild heart failure (no or mild symptoms with vigorous or moderate exercise) are usually asked to limit their sodium intake to 2,300 mg per day.
- People with moderate to severe heart failure (symptoms with light exercise, household chores or at rest) are usually asked to limit their sodium intake to 2,000 mg per day.
- Check with your doctor or nurse for the sodium limit that is best for you.
- DO NOT use potassium-based salt substitutes without consulting your doctor. If you aren't sure, check the label or ingredient list for "potassium" or "potassium chloride".



FOLLOWING A LOW SALT DIET

There are four basic steps to following a low salt diet:

1. Stop adding salt to your food and ask if food can be prepared without salt if dining out.
2. Adapt your preferred foods to a low sodium version.
3. Pick foods naturally low in sodium.
4. Read food labels.

STOP ADDING SALT TO YOUR FOOD

You can decrease your sodium intake by as much as 30 percent by doing two simple things:

- Take the salt shaker off the table.
- Do not add any salt of any type when cooking.



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Food doesn't have to taste bland without salt! Try these tips to make foods taste great without adding salt:

- Experiment with sodium free herbs, spices and seasoning mixes.
- Try using seasonings like black, cayenne or lemon pepper.
- Dried and fresh herbs such as garlic, garlic or onion powder (not salt), dill, parsley and rosemary are also naturally low in sodium. Combination spice mixes in a bottle are great as long as sodium or salt is not one of the ingredients.
- Use balsamic or other vinegars to flavor foods or marinate meats.
- Sprinkle fresh lemon juice over vegetables and salads.
- Season or marinate meat, poultry and fish ahead of time with onion, garlic, vinegar, wine and your favorite herbs before cooking to bring out the flavor.
- Avoid spices and seasoning mixes with the word salt or sodium in the name. They will be high in sodium. For example, just a teaspoon of a seasoned salt such as garlic salt or celery salt contains about 1,500 mg of sodium.
- There are many salt free seasoning mixes in your supermarket. Look in the spice section for seasonings labeled "salt free".
- Avoid salt substitutes made with potassium (such as NuSalt, Also Salt, Morton Lite Salt).

ADAPT YOUR PREFERRED FOODS TO A LOW SODIUM VERSION

Consider getting a low salt cookbook. You can find excellent low salt cookbooks at your local library. You can also buy one at a bookstore or on the Internet. After getting used to low sodium eating, you will be able to adapt your favorite recipes to low sodium versions.

For example, if you like soup, make your own low sodium version with fresh meat and vegetables. Toss the ingredients into a slow cooker and use herbs and spices for seasonings. Make extra and freeze some for later meals.



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Use low sodium substitutes

For example, prepare a fresh lean pork roast instead of a country ham. You can cook fresh chicken, turkey, roast beef or pork without adding salt and use the meats for sandwiches instead of packaged lunch meats. Use fresh lettuce, tomato and onion for flavoring.

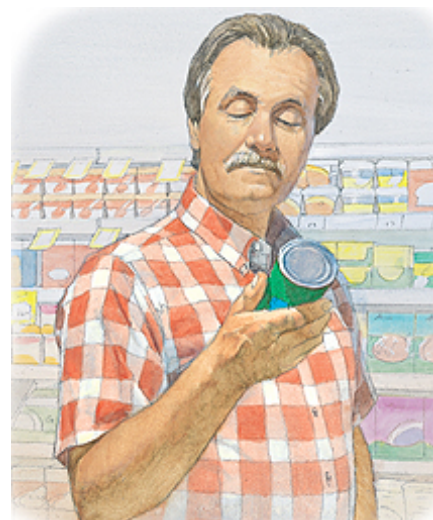
EXAMPLES OF HIGH SODIUM FOODS AND *LOW SODIUM ALTERNATIVES*

Baking powder (1 tsp.)	400–550 mg	Salted nuts (1 oz.)	120–250 mg
<i>Low sodium baking powder (1 tsp.)</i>	<i>5 mg</i>	<i>Unsalted nuts (1 oz.)</i>	<i>3–10 mg</i>
Garlic salt (1 tsp.)	1,480 mg	Saltine crackers (1 cracker)	70 mg
<i>Garlic powder (1 tsp.)</i>	<i>1 mg</i>	<i>Low sodium saltine crackers (1 cracker)</i>	<i>7 mg</i>
Peanut butter (2 tbsp.)	150–250 mg	Self-rising flour (1 cup)	1,600 mg
<i>Unsalted peanut butter (2 tbsp.)</i>	<i>0 mg</i>	<i>Enriched white flour (1 cup)</i>	<i>3–6 mg</i>
Canned pasta sauce (1/4 cup)	25–275 mg	Ham (3 oz.)	1,025 mg
<i>No salt added pasta sauce (1/4 cup)</i>	<i>25 mg</i>	<i>Fresh pork (3 oz.)</i>	<i>60 mg</i>
French fries (small order)	150–700 mg	Instant oatmeal (3/4 cup)	180 mg
<i>Unsalted French fries</i>	<i>10–20 mg</i>	<i>Regular cooking oatmeal (3/4 cup)</i>	<i>5 mg</i>
Corned beef (3 oz.)	800 mg	Turkey ham (3 oz.)	865 mg
<i>Roast beef (3 oz.)</i>	<i>60 mg</i>	<i>Turkey (3 oz.)</i>	<i>75 mg</i>

Look for low sodium versions

Many types of canned goods are now available in low sodium versions. Look for canned foods labeled sodium free, no salt, low sodium, light in sodium, very low sodium, reduced sodium or unsalted. These are good eye catching words but be sure that you still read the food label.

You can also remove some sodium from canned foods by rinsing them, soaking them and rinsing them again. Keep in mind that this does not remove all of the sodium.



READING FOOD LABELS

Reading the food label is a big step toward eating for a healthier heart. Food labels tell you what's contained within the foods you eat. Comparing labels will help you make food choices that are low in sodium (salt), fat and cholesterol but high in fiber. To get started, look for the "Nutrition Facts" label on packaged foods.

Serving Size

Look at this closely. This is the amount of food in 1 serving. If you eat more, you get more of everything on the label—including salt, fat and calories.

Servings Per Container

There is often more than 1 serving per container of food, even if the container is small. For the label shown here, if you eat the full container, you are eating two times the serving size (280 mg of sodium).

Total Fat

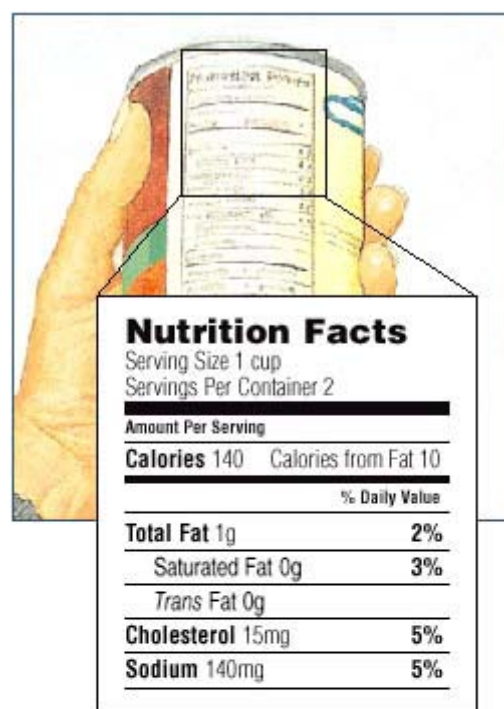
This number tells you how many grams (g) of fat are in 1 serving. Choose foods with a low number for total fat.

Saturated Fat

This number tells you how many grams (g) of saturated fat are in 1 serving. Look for foods that have little or no saturated fat.

Trans Fat

This number tells you how much trans fat is in 1 serving. Choose foods that have little or no trans fat.



Cholesterol

This number tells you how much cholesterol is in 1 serving. You should eat less than 300 milligrams (mg) of cholesterol a day.

Sodium

This number tells you how much sodium is in 1 serving. Choose foods with low numbers for sodium or look for foods that say Low Sodium or Sodium Free. An entire meal should contain 700 mg or less of sodium.

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PICK FOODS NATURALLY LOW IN SODIUM

Choose fresh foods

Fresh fruits and vegetables have very little sodium. The same is true for fresh meat, poultry and fish. Generally, you don't have to count the sodium content when eating fresh, unprocessed foods. So, think fresh when choosing foods.

If you are not eating fresh foods, choose low sodium foods as much as possible. Good options include canned fruit and plain frozen vegetables. Dried beans, peas, rice and lentils are also excellent low sodium foods. Make sure not to add salt or other ingredients such as salt pork or bouillon when cooking them. Keep a list of low sodium, heart healthy foods that you like and bring it with you to the store. The more detailed the list, the less time you have to spend reading labels each shopping trip.

LOW SODIUM FOODS

Foods with less than 10 mg of sodium per serving

- Fruit and fruit juices (fresh, frozen or canned)
- Honey, sugar
- Hot cereals such as oatmeal, wheat and oat bran (regular cooking, not instant which is high in sodium, 1 cup with no salt added while cooking)
- Jelly beans (10 large)
- Macaroni, noodles, rice and barley (1 cup cooked in unsalted water with no added salt)
- Salt free herbs and spices
- Shredded wheat or puffed rice cereals (1 cup)
- Unsalted nuts
- Unsalted peanut butter (but not regular peanut butter)
- Unsalted butter or margarine (but not regular)
- Unsalted cottage cheese (1/2 cup)
- Vegetables (most types fresh or frozen except those in the 10–40 mg section, see next page)
- Vinegar



HEART FAILURE AND A HEALTHY DIET**Foods with 10–40 mg of sodium
per serving**

- Beets (1/2 cup)
- Beet greens (1/3 cup)
- Carrots (1 cup)
- Celery (2 stalks)
- Club soda (8 oz.)
- Granola cereal (1/2 cup)
- Kale (3/4 cup)
- Soda pop (8 oz.)
- Spinach (1/2 cup cooked)
- Vanilla wafers (2 cookies)
- White wine (4 oz.)



Initially it may take longer to shop. As you become familiar with low sodium food choices shopping will be easier.

**Foods with 40–65 mg of sodium
per serving**

- Beef, pork, lamb and poultry (fresh, 3 oz.)
- Corn tortilla (1, 6 inch)
- Egg (1)
- Fish (fresh, 3 oz.)
- Fruit-filled cookies (1, small)
- Shrimp (2 oz.)

**Foods with 65–120 mg of sodium
per serving**

- Clams, steamed (3 oz.)
- Ice cream (1/2 cup)
- Mayonnaise (1 tbsp.)

- Milk (evaporated, 1/2 cup)
- Milk (whole or skim, 1 cup)
- Mustard, chili and hot sauce (1 tsp.)
- Yogurt (1 cup)

**Foods with 120–175 mg of sodium
per serving**

- Bread (some types, 1 slice)
- Chocolate covered peanut butter cups (2)
- English muffin (1/2)
- Ketchup and steak sauce (1 tsp.)
- Olives (ripe, 5)
- Sardines (1 large)
- Peanut butter (regular, 2 tbsp.)

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Use herbs and spices

Herbs and spices add flavor to cooking without adding fat or sodium. That's why they're great for healthy cooking. Try these tips to help create tasty, healthy meals.

- Use a sharp knife to cut fresh herbs. Cutting the leaves finely will release the most flavor.
- Don't grind whole spices until you need them. Crushing or grating whole spices just before adding them to a recipe will guarantee the most flavor.
- Dried herbs pack more flavor for the same quantity of fresh herbs. Powdered herbs are more potent than dried flakes. If you are using powdered herbs in a recipe that calls for fresh, decrease the amount you add.
- When adding herbs to cold recipes, such as dips or salad dressings, allow the food to sit in the refrigerator for a couple of hours before serving so the flavors can blend.
- Add fresh herbs to hot dishes as close to serving time as possible for the most flavorful results. Dried herbs and spices should be added early in the cooking process to prevent a powdery taste.
- Store dried herbs in a cool, dry, dark place. Keep dried herbs for no longer than a year.
- Experiment with different herbs and spices. Try these vegetable and herb combinations:
 - Asparagus with garlic, lemon juice, mustard seed, onion, sesame seed, tarragon
 - Snap peas with basil, dill, lemon, marjoram, mint, nutmeg, oregano, tarragon
 - Beets with allspice, bay leaves, caraway seed, cloves, dill, ginger, mustard seed, thyme
 - Broccoli with caraway seeds, dill, mustard seed, tarragon
 - Cabbage with caraway seed, celery seed, dill, mint, mustard seed, nutmeg, tarragon
 - Carrots with allspice, bay leaves, caraway seed, dill, fennel, ginger, mace, marjoram
 - Corn with cayenne (red pepper), chili powder
 - Cucumbers with basil, chives, dill, garlic, mint, tarragon, vinegar
 - Green salads with basil, chives, dill, tarragon
 - Peas with basil, marjoram, mint, oregano, parsley, poppy seed, rosemary
 - Potatoes with basil, bay leaves, celery seeds, chives, dill, mustard seed, oregano, thyme
 - Squash with allspice, basil, cinnamon, cloves, ginger, mustard seed, nutmeg, rosemary



EATING OUT ON A LOW SALT DIET

Many people go out to eat several times each week. Eating out, whether it is at a restaurant, a friend's house or a party, can be challenging if you are on a low sodium diet. You can go out to eat and maintain a low sodium diet, if you are careful.

Use the following tips while eating out:

- Choose restaurants that offer fresh food choices.
- Be specific about what you want and how you want it prepared when ordering. For example, ask that your food be prepared without added salt, monosodium glutamate (MSG) or soy sauce.
- Do not be afraid to question your waiter about how the food is prepared.
- Choose foods without sauces or ask for sauces and salad dressings “on the side”.
- If you use salad dressing, dip the tines of your fork into the dressing cup and then pierce your food, instead of pouring the dressing over your food. That way you get the flavor without all the sodium.
- Use the same technique with other types of sauces such as barbecue, steak, creamed, cheesy, Hollandaise, Alfredo or red spaghetti sauces. It also works with gravies.
- Limit use of condiments that are high in sodium such as Worcestershire sauce, steak sauce or ketchup.
- Avoid dishes named au gratin, Parmesan, hashed, Newberg, casserole and Devonshire.
- Be careful of foods that are labeled as good for your heart. These foods are usually low fat, but they may be high in sodium. In many cases, salt is used to flavor low fat foods.
- Choose the salad bar. It can be an excellent way to eat a low sodium meal in a restaurant.



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- Choose fresh vegetables, fruits and eggs served in their natural state. That includes lettuce greens, spinach, tomatoes, cucumbers, onions, radishes, green peppers, red peppers, alfalfa sprouts, fresh mushrooms, broccoli, cauliflower, carrots, red cabbage and hard boiled eggs.
- Avoid high sodium foods including croutons, green olives, black olives, shredded cheese, bacon bits, macaroni salad, potato salad, coleslaw, sunflower seeds, pepperoni, Chinese noodles, pickles and creamy salad dressings.
- Choose the following salad dressings: oil and vinegar, lemon and flavored vinegars such as balsamic and raspberry. Avoid regular, light and fat free dressings unless you order on the side and dip your fork tines in the dressing. They are all high in sodium.

ASK!

Will the restaurant:

- Serve fat free or 1% milk?
- Trim visible fat from poultry or meat?
- Leave off all butter, gravy or sauces?
- Serve salad dressing on the side?
- Accommodate special requests?
- Use less cooking oil?
- Prepare a dish using canola or olive oil?
- Use trans fat free margarines?
- Serve fruit, ices, sherbet or other low fat desserts?
- Take special food preparation requests?
- Prepare food without MSG or salt?
- Broil, bake, steam or poach rather than fry foods?

ACT!

Select foods that are:

- Steamed
- Garden fresh
- Broiled
- Baked
- Roasted
- Poached
- Lightly sautéed or stir-fried



HEART FAILURE AND A HEALTHY DIET**CHECKLIST FOR EATING OUT**

- Don't be shy or intimidated about making special requests.
- If your food is not prepared as you requested, send it back.
- Most foods will fit in a heart healthy diet if prepared low fat and with less salt.
- Watch portion sizes, split your food with a friend or take some home.



Type of Restaurant	Foods to Choose	Foods to Avoid
Asian Food	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Menu items that are made to order and include a variety of vegetables • Food prepared without salt, soy sauce or MSG • Spring rolls that are not deep fried • Steamed rice instead of fried rice • Entrees with vegetables and lean meat, chicken, fish or tofu 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deep fried egg rolls, wontons, tofu, meats and noodles • Curry sauces and gravies • Fried rice
Italian Food	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Items that are fixed to order • Order sauces on the side • Items with tomato or red clam sauce 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Items in heavy cream sauces (such as Alfredo) • Cheese • Breaded or fried foods
Salad Bars	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whole grain breads and other grain products • Tofu, legumes • Fresh fruits and vegetables 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bacon bits, pickles, salted sunflower seeds • Meat salads (such as tuna or chicken salads) • Cheese

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Type of Restaurant	Foods to Choose	Foods to Avoid
Fast Food	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-packaged salad with low fat salad dressing • Sandwiches without pickles, mayonnaise, cheese or special sauces • Roasted or broiled meat sandwiches • Submarine sandwiches with lean meats and lots of vegetables 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Breaded chicken, fried fish, onion rings and French fries • Cheese, bacon and large serving of hamburger • Malts or milkshakes • High salt items such as cured meats (ham, salami, etc), olives, pickles and dressings
Family Style Food	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grilled or baked chicken or fish • Baked potatoes (without butter or sour cream) • Steamed vegetables and tossed salads with low fat dressing • A side salad instead of French fries or chips • Low fat or nonfat yogurt or sherbet for dessert 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dishes with lots of cheese, sour cream or cream sauces (such as Hollandaise or Alfredo) • Fried fish or chicken • Dishes that are smothered, fried, breaded or creamy • Appetizer-type foods, au gratin potatoes, prime rib, cream soups and milkshakes
Mexican Food	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dishes with a variety of vegetables and very little cheese • Beans, rice, corn or flour tortillas, lean meat and chicken items (such as fajitas and chile verde) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deep fried tortilla chips and taco shells • Cheese or sour cream
Breakfast Food	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fresh fruit • Whole grain toast and cereals • Fat free or low fat yogurt • Eggs dishes made with egg substitute or egg whites 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cheese and butter • Creamy sauces • Bacon • Ham • Sausage

HEART FAILURE AND A HEALTHY DIET**SAMPLE LOW SODIUM MENUS****Day 1—1,500 calories**

2,300 mg Sodium Menu	Sodium mg	Substitution To Reduce Sodium to 1,500 mg	Sodium mg
BREAKFAST 302 Calories, 348 mg Sodium			
3/4 cup bran flakes	220	3/4 cup shredded wheat cereal	1
1/2 banana	1		
1 cup non-fat milk	127		
1 whole orange	0		
LUNCH 499 Calories, 805 mg Sodium			
Chicken Breast Sandwich			
3 oz grilled or broiled	120	1 Tbsp regular mustard	175
2 slices whole wheat bread	299		
1 Tbsp Dijon mustard	373		
1/4 whole mashed avocado	5		
1/2 cup fresh cucumber slice	1		
2 tomato slices	2		
1/2 cup fruit cocktail, juice pack	5		
DINNER 440 Calories, 379 mg Sodium			
3 oz cod:	70		
1 tsp lemon juice	1		
1/2 cup brown rice	5		
1 cup spinach, cooked from frozen, sauteed with 1 tsp canola oil:	184		
1 small cornbread muffin, made with oil:	119		
SNACK 288 Calories, 153 mg Sodium			
1/2 cup fruit yogurt, fat free, no sugar added	75		
1/4 cup almonds, unsalted	0		
1 lg graham cracker rectangle	78		
Total Calories	1529		1529
Total Milligrams of Sodium	1685		1268

HEART FAILURE AND A HEALTHY DIET**Day 2—1,500 calories**

2,300 mg Sodium Menu	Sodium mg	Substitution To Reduce Sodium to 1,500 mg	Sodium mg
BREAKFAST 356 Calories, 285 mg Sodium			
1 low-fat granola bar	81		
1/2 banana	1		
1/2 cup fruit yogurt, fat-free, no sugar added	75		
1 cup non-fat milk	127		
1 cup fresh strawberries	1		
LUNCH 528 Calories, 812 mg Sodium			
1 turkey breast sandwich:			
3 oz turkey breast	48		
2 slices whole wheat bread	299		
1 large leaf romaine lettuce	1		
2 slices tomato	2		
1/4 whole avocado, mashed	5		
1 Tbsp Dijon mustard	373	Omit mustard	0
1 cup carrot sticks	84		
1 medium apple	0		
DINNER 404 Calories, 623 mg Sodium			
1 cup spaghetti (try multi grain):	1		
3/4 cup vegetarian sauce*	479	Use low-sodium tomato paste (6 oz) in recipe	253
1 Tbsp Parmesan cheese	93		
Spinach salad		<i>*recipes on following page</i>	
1 cup fresh spinach leaves	24		
1/4 cup fresh carrot, grated	19		
1/4 cup fresh mushrooms	1		
1 Tbsp vinaigrette dressing*	1		
1/2 cup canned pears	5		
SNACK 203 Calories, 4 mg Sodium			
1 oz walnuts (about 14 halves)	1		
1/4 cup dried apricots	3		
Total Calories	1541		1541
Total Milligrams of Sodium	1724		1498

Vegetarian Spaghetti Sauce

2 Tbsp olive oil	1 Tbsp basil, dried
2 small onions, chopped	1 8 oz can tomato sauce
3 cloves garlic, chopped	1 6 oz can tomato paste*
1 1/4 cups zucchini, sliced	2 medium tomatoes, chopped
1 Tbsp oregano, dried	1 cup water

1. In a medium skillet, heat oil. Sauté onions, garlic and zucchini in oil for 5 minutes on medium heat.
2. Add remaining ingredients and simmer covered for 45 minutes. Serve over spaghetti.

Makes 6 servings. 105 calories per serving. Serving Size: 3/4 cup. *To reduce sodium, use a 6 oz can of low-sodium tomato paste. New sodium content for each serving is 253 mg.

Vinaigrette Salad Dressing

1 bulb garlic, separated and peeled
1/2 cup water
1 Tbsp red wine vinegar
1/4 tsp honey
1 Tbsp virgin olive oil
1/4 tsp black pepper



1. Place the garlic cloves into a small saucepan and pour enough water (about 1/2 cup) to cover them.
2. Bring water to a boil, then reduce heat and simmer until garlic is tender, about 15 minutes.
3. Reduce the liquid to 2 Tbsp and increase the heat for 3 minutes.
4. Pour the contents into a small sieve over a bowl, and with a wooden spoon, mash the garlic through the sieve into the bowl.
5. Whisk the vinegar into the garlic mixture; incorporate the oil and seasoning.

Makes 4 servings. 33 calories per serving. Serving Size: 2 Tbsp.

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AMERICAN HEART ASSOCIATION RECOMMENDED COOKBOOKS

From quick dinner ideas to delicious desserts, American Heart Association cookbooks provide lots of ways to make cooking healthier.

- American Heart Association Low-Salt Cookbook, 3rd Edition
- American Heart Association Low-Fat, Low-Cholesterol Cookbook, Third Edition
- The New American Heart Association Cookbook, 7th Edition
- American Heart Association One-Dish Meals
- American Heart Association Low-Calorie Cookbook
- American Heart Association Meals in Minutes Cookbook
- American Heart Association No-Fad Diet: A Personal Plan for Healthy Weight Loss
- Diabetes & Heart Healthy Cookbook
- American Heart Association Quick & Easy Cookbook
- American Heart Association Low-Fat & Luscious Desserts



If you have questions or want more information, call the John Muir Health
Nutrition Services Department.

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