

# Fluid Management

When you drink too much fluid, your heart has to work much harder to pump the extra fluid around your body. This can make your heart failure symptoms worsen. Limiting fluid intake is key to preventing Emergency Room visits and hospital stays.

## The goal of this section is to help you learn:

- Why you need to limit your fluid intake
- What is considered a fluid
- Your daily fluid goal
- How to measure and monitor your fluid intake
- Tips to help you with this lifestyle change

## What is a fluid restriction?

A fluid restriction means you can only have a certain amount of fluid each day. Your provider will recommend **limiting fluids to 8 cups (2000ml or 2-liters) per day**. They may change this limit based on your specific plan of care.

## What should I count as fluid?

Fluid from both food and drink should be counted toward your daily fluid limit. Any food that is liquid at room temperature counts as fluid. If it melts or pours at room temperature it is a fluid.

Here are some examples of drinks and foods that count as part of your fluid total:

Any beverage you drink	
Water	Milk
Coffee	Liquid creamer
Tea	Juice
Soda pop	Fruit-flavored drinks, lemonade, punch
Sports drinks	Nutrition supplements like Ensure or Boost
Liquid medicine	Alcohol

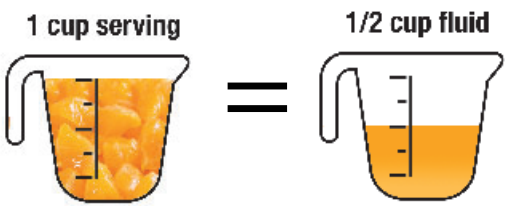
Fluids that are part of a food	
Soup	Broth
Gravies	Sauces

**Foods that melt down to a liquid  
(1 cup = ½ cup fluid)**

Jell-O®	Sherbet
Popsicles	Frozen yogurt
Ice cream	Ice cubes
Milkshakes/smoothies	

**Juicy fruits or vegetables (1 cup = ½ cup fluid)**

Melons (watermelon, cantaloupe, honeydew, etc.)	Cucumbers Tomatoes
Oranges, Grapes, apples, peaches, berries	Applesauce



**How do I track my fluid intake?**

Fluids can be measured in different ways. To help you measure, the chart below lists some common equivalent household amounts:

Tablespoon/Cup of fluid	Equivalent fluid ounce	Equivalent milliliters (ml)
1 tablespoon	½ fluid ounce	15ml
2 tablespoons	1 ounce	30 ml
½ cup	4 ounce	120 milliliters (ml)
1 cup	8 ounce	240 ml
4 cups	32 ounce	1000 ml (1-liter)
5 cups	40 ounce	1.2 liters
6 ¼ cups	50 ounce	1.5 liters
8 cups	67 ounce	2000 ml (2-liters)



2 liter bottle  
or pitcher

## Keeping track of your fluids- container method

There is an easy way to track your fluid intake using a water pitcher or 2-liter pop bottle:

1. Fill the container with 2 liters (2000 ml) of water.
2. Each time you eat or drink, count the amount of fluid coming from beverages and food. This includes fluid from each meal, snack, or beverage break.
3. Pour an equal amount of fluid out of the container after each meal, snack, or beverage break.
4. When the container is empty, you will know you have reached your fluid limit for the day.

## Keeping track of your fluids- written method

You need to keep track of how much fluid you have every day. You can use the log below to track your fluid.

Extra copies of this Fluid Tracking Log can be printed from the *Michigan Medicine Care Guides from Your Clinician* site:

<https://careguides.med.umich.edu/>

Type in the keywords **heart fluid log** and then you can download and print.

Meal	Food or beverage:	Fluid (ml) per serving:	Total fluid (ml):
<i>Example:</i>	<i>Coffee Cantaloupe Ice chips</i>	<i>1 cup of coffee= 240ml 1 cup fruit (½ cup fluid) =120ml ½ cup (1/4 cup fluid) =60ml</i>	<i>240+120+60= 420ml</i>
<b>Breakfast</b>			
<b>Snack</b>			
<b>Lunch</b>			
<b>Snack</b>			
<b>Dinner</b>			
<b>Snack</b>			
<b>Total Daily Fluid (ml) =</b>			

## What are some helpful hints for fluid control?

Plan ahead. Spread your fluid allowance over the whole day. Don't drink it all at once. The chart below can help you plan your fluid amounts:

Menu Planner for Fluids			
For a 1.5 Liter (1500 mL) daily limit:		For a 2 Liter (2000 mL) daily limit:	
Breakfast:	1 ¼ cups fluid	Breakfast:	2 cups fluid
AM Snack:	1 cup fluid	AM Snack:	1 ¼ cups fluid
Lunch:	1 cup fluid	Lunch:	2 cups fluid
PM Snack:	1 cup fluid	PM Snack:	1 cup fluid
Dinner:	1 cup fluid	Dinner:	1 cup fluid
Night Snack:	1 cup fluid	Night Snack:	1 cup fluid

- Know how much fluid your cups, bowls, mugs, and glasses hold.
- Use small cups and glasses for beverages.
- Keep track of your fluid intake. A fluid log can help you record your fluids and add up your total each day (see previous page).

## What do I need to remember about fluids and taking medications?

- Remember to save some fluids to take with your medicine. Fluid you use to take medications must also be counted in your fluid restriction.
- Ask your pharmacist what medicines you can take with food.
- Save fluids from your meals to take pills. Some medicines say to take with a full glass of water- check with your nurse or provider first.

## **What if I get thirsty?**

It is very important to follow the fluid limit set by your provider. But it can be difficult. Try one of these tips if you feel thirsty:

- Chew sugarless gum or suck on hard sugarless candies or mints
- Snack on frozen fruit like grapes or strawberries (this still counts toward your fluid restriction)
- Gargle with alcohol-free mouthwash, rinse with cold water and spit out
- Suck on a lemon slice
- Chew on fresh peeled ginger
- Apply lip balm to your lips if they are dry
- Try artificial saliva products
- Breathe through your nose and not your mouth
- Use a humidifier to moisten the air

## **Action steps you can take:**

- Limit fluid intake to 8 cups per day
- Count the full volume of fluids
- Count half the volume of foods that melt
- Count half the volume of juicy fruits and vegetables
- Start tracking today