
Fluid and Heart Failure

Individuals with heart failure may gain excess weight due to fluid buildup. This extra weight makes the heart work harder and weakens it. Too much fluid may also cause problems like swollen feet or swollen ankles, high blood pressure, or difficulty breathing. Monitoring your fluid can help prevent complications or hospitalizations. The amount of fluid needed depends on if you have stable heart failure or decompensated heart failure. You only need fluid restrictions with decompensated heart failure.

What counts as a fluid?

Fluids are foods that are liquid at room temperature. All these foods count toward your fluid intake:

- Water for drinking and taking medications
- Juices, both fruit and vegetables
- Ice cubes and ice chips
- Coffee, tea, and other hot beverages
- Sodas, beer, alcoholic drinks, lemonade
- Milk, cream, liquid creamer, milk shakes
- Soup, broth, and gravy
- Popsicles® and frozen fruit bars
- Ice cream, sherbet, and sorbets
- Gelatin and custard

How much fluid is right for me?

The amount of fluid you should drink will depend on your heart condition. During times of decompensation fluids may need to be limited to 1-2 L (32-64 oz). Upon stable fluid status, with good urine output, fluid needs change and increase. Urine output should be slightly more than intake to prevent negative effects on the kidneys. Stable patients with excellent urine output and low sodium diet may be able to consume more than 2 L of fluid per day.

The amount of fluid recommended for you is _____.

Conversions for Fluid intake

Millimeters (mL)	Liters (L)	Ounces (oz)	Cups (c)
1000	1	32	4
1200	1.2	40	5
1500	1.5	50	6 1/4

1800	1.8	60	7 1/2
2000	2	64	8

How do I know how much fluid I am getting?

It can help to track the amount of liquid you take in each day on a sheet of paper or in a notebook. Here are some other ideas:

- Use a measuring cup to find out the amount of liquid that your favorite glass or mug holds.
- Measure the size of the cups, glasses, and bowls that you use daily to keep track of your daily fluid intake.
- Monitor your urine. If you notice that your urine is dark in color and has a strong odor, this could mean that fluid is building up in your body rather than dehydration. Consider contacting your doctor.

Tips to reduce your thirst

- Chew gum or suck on hard candy
- Rinse or gargle with mouthwash
- Add lemon wedge to your water
- Use small glasses and cups and sip slowly
- Eat frozen blueberries or blackberries
- Space your liquids throughout the day
- Limit sodium intake. Excess sodium (salt) can make you thirsty.
- Add 1 cup of diced watermelon