

CHF News: Take It To Heart



A monthly newsletter for REACT study patients

Issue #3

Coping With Congestive Heart Failure

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Congestive heart failure has a major impact on patients and their families. Regardless of the age of the individual diagnosed with CHF, the transition from healthy to sick is very difficult. There is so much to learn and adapt to: fluid and salt restriction; when to exercise and when to rest; when to take medication; what to expect from different medications; what to do when symptoms reoccur; and much more. The resulting changes to lifestyle often lead to serious problems. In many instances, patients may lose their job and face a considerable loss of income. Marital pressures may arise and lead to divorce. Unable to participate in their usual peer activities, patients may even lose friendships. The situation can become extremely frustrating, setting the stage for anger or depression.

Two common symptoms of CHF are shortness of breath and

extreme fatigue. These symptoms deplete patients of the usual "get-up-and-go" and prevent them from enjoying the activities that enriched their lives before the disease. Further complications arise when the signs of CHF become more pronounced due to fluid retention in the lungs and other organs. Sometimes, in spite of all the efforts to reduce the build-up of fluid, patients end up in a hospital emergency room. This often leaves them feeling like they have no control over their condition and that life has become a roller coaster ride between good days and bad days.

It takes a lot of energy and cooperation between all those involved to maintain the patient's sense of well-being and control over the situation. In order to cope, patients and their family members need to be educated on how to do so. They also require ongoing support from the health professionals involved in the patient's care.

In addition, patients and their immediate family members need

support from friends and other family members. A visit from a good old friend can reassure the patient that they still have an important role in the lives of others and this can make a big difference in how the patient feels about his or her situation. When feeling well, it's good to get involved in social activities like going for coffee with a friend, or going shopping, or enjoying a short walk (a few blocks) in good company. Don't forget about that golf game with the good old pals. For those who are really keen, the planning of a visit to family or friends who live out of town, or a longer holiday or cruise (when affordable), can bring a lot of happiness.

Most of all, the well-being of a person with congestive heart failure depends on having hope in the outcome. In spite of how gloomy the situation can be at times, it is important to focus on the positive instead of the negative. Perspective can make a big difference.

Planning a trip?

By Dr. Scot Simpson
Pharmacist and Cardiology Research Fellow
University of Alberta

Travelling can be exciting, allowing you to see new places or to return to favorite old spots! Either way, a change of environment can put a fresh perspective on life. So if you're up to it, go for it! Here are a few things to put on your TO DO list as you plan for that trip:

- Check with your family doctor or cardiologist that it is safe for you to travel.
- Pack all your medication in your carry-on bags to avoid problems in the event that your baggage is lost or delayed.
- Take enough medication for the entire trip, plus a few days, in case your return is delayed.
- If you are going to another country, carry all your medication in the original containers you received from the pharmacy. This will help you address any concerns customs officers may have about the drugs you are carrying. Once you reach your destination, you can fill your weekly or daily medication container.
- Take with you a list of all your medication, the strengths and instructions on how to take it. Include the phone numbers of your family doctor and pharmacist. This list will be very helpful if you run out of medication. (You can use your REACT Medication Wallet Card; it contains all this information.)
- If you are travelling over a long distance and changing time zones, talk to your doctor or pharmacist to find out how to readjust your medication schedule.
- Break a long trip into shorter, more manageable parts.

HEARTWISE ADVICE



Carry a
wallet card
that lists your
medication

A Medication Wallet Card can prove to be the most valuable item to carry around at all times. It lists all your medication and medical conditions. In the event of an emergency, when you may be too upset to remember, or even too ill to speak, your Medication Wallet Card will provide the doctors, nurses, pharmacists or paramedics with the necessary information.



Caution:
**SALT
AHEAD!**

By Pamela Monkhouse
Clinical Dietitian, University of Alberta Hospital

Initially, going out to restaurants can be a bit of a challenge, but with careful planning, it can become enjoyable again. In the last issue, we provided you with ideas about what to do to make dining in restaurants less intimidating. The most important thing for you to remember is that you have choices. By choosing wisely, you can have a meal that fits into your low salt diet. The following are two menu comparisons taken from the *Low Sodium Savvy* cookbook. It's up to you to choose.

HIGH SODIUM MENU

LOW SODIUM MENU

COMPARISON I

Amount	Food	Sodium (mg)
6 to 8	Nachos with cheese	816
1	Chicken breast (breaded & fried)	975
1/2 cup (125 ml)	Mashed potatoes with gravy	309
1/2 cup (125 ml)	Broccoli (in white sauce)	190
Total		2290

Amount	Food	Sodium (mg)
1 cup (250 ml)	Lettuce & greens (with oil & vinegar)	14
1	Baked chicken breast (with lemon & herbs)	80
1	Baked potato (with sour cream & chives)	182
1/2 cup (125 ml)	Broccoli (with herbs and margarine)	90
Total		366

COMPARISON II

Amount	Food	Sodium (mg)
1	McDonald's Quarter Pounder with cheese	1179
1	Chef salad	279
1	French dressing	484
1	Strawberry milkshake	185
Total		2127

Amount	Food	Sodium (mg)
1	Hamburger	418
1	Garden salad	39
1	Vinaigrette	167
1	Milk	128
Total		752

HEARTFELT PROFILES



I am 75 years old and retired. I have had congestive heart failure for about 4 or 5 years. In addition, I suffer from diabetes. Currently, my treatment involves 30 different medications.

My wife is in a very similar medical situation so the changes we had to make to our lifestyle were not so difficult because we made them together. Primarily, we have adopted a much healthier diet. To keep a close eye on my condition, I have got into the habit

of weighing myself every morning. I restrict my fluid intake as much as possible. For exercise, I walk and play golf.

Every once in a while I do end up in the hospital. It's a pretty regular occurrence and I tell myself that there's just no use getting upset over it. This is simply how it goes with congestive heart disease.

If I was to give other patients any advice about the management of their condition, I would suggest that they see their cardiologist regularly and take all the advice and help that's given to them.

COOK TO YOUR HEART'S CONTENT



Honey Chicken Wings

3 lbs	chicken wings	1.5 kg
1 tbsp	chili powder	15 mL
dash	garlic powder	dash
2 tbsp	dry bread crumbs	25 mL

Honey Sauce:

1/3 cup	honey	75 mL
1 tbsp	lemon juice	15 mL
1/4 tsp	garlic powder	1 mL
1/4 tsp	ground ginger	1 mL
3/4 cup	pineapple juice	175 mL

Put chili powder, garlic powder and bread crumbs in a brown paper bag. Add chicken, a few pieces at a time and shake until coated. Put wings in a greased pan. Bake 30 minutes at 300°F (150°C). Meanwhile combine honey, lemon juice, garlic powder, ground ginger and pineapple juice. Drizzle wings with honey sauce. Bake 30 more minutes.

Makes approximately 48 chicken wings.

From "Low Sodium Savvy" by L. Kerr, M. Kennedy, Clinical Dietitians, Nephrology and Renal Transplant Program, University of Alberta Hospital

*If you would like to purchase a copy of this cookbook, please contact:
Cara Stark – Phone 780-407-1565, Fax 780-407-6015,
Address 5B1.07 Walter Mackenzie Centre, 8440-112 Street
Edmonton, Alberta, T6G 2B7. Cost: \$9.95 (includes GST and shipping)*



Variation: Use pork spareribs instead of chicken wings.

HONEY CHICKEN WINGS Per 6 Wings (4 oz (100 g))

calories	443
protein	32 g
fat	28 g
carbohydrate	17 g
sodium	148 mg
potassium	329 mg
phosphorus	233 mg



CHF can be managed, especially if you, the patient, take an active role. Give some special attention to yourself, and **DO REACT** to your body's needs:

- D**o weigh yourself each day
- O**bserve and record any signs and symptoms of CHF
- R**est
- E**xercise
- A**void salty foods and limit fluids in your diet
- C**ontact your doctor if you feel unwell
- T**ake your medication regularly