

## HEART FAILURE PATIENT

# EATING OUT *HeartWise*

*Developed by the AAHFN Patient Education Committee*

Dining out allows for a relaxing break from daily responsibilities as well as fostering social time with family and friends. It's also an opportunity to try new and different foods we normally wouldn't prepare at home. Most restaurant foods have extra added salt & fat to enhance the taste. If you are trying to live a Heart Healthy lifestyle and are limiting or avoiding salt and fat, these suggestions are for you! It is possible to enjoy going out to eat without fear of becoming ill by following these recommendations:

### If eating at a "chain" restaurant:

- 1** Go online to the restaurant's website (for example: [www.mcdonalds.com](http://www.mcdonalds.com)) and search for Nutrition Information. Here you will find food label information for specific items on the menu, such as fat in grams, sodium in milligrams. For those who do not have a computer, ask the restaurant manager for a written nutrition guide or nutrition information.
- 2** Avoid or limit going to buffet-type restaurants. Most people find it difficult to limit portions and/or the number of plates they eat, thinking "I need to get my money's worth". Remember, the more you eat, the more salt, calories and fat you are consuming.
- 3** Avoid or limit soups. Typically, one cup (8 ounces) of soup contains 900-1200mg sodium. Cream soups contain 15-20 grams of fat, while broth-based soups contain 1-3 grams.
- 4** Eat fresh salad before the main meal. Use limited amounts of salad dressing (1 tablespoon=100-150mg usually), or bring your own from home in a sealed container. Avoid or limit salads drenched in dressing or with lunchmeats and cheese that add salt and fat. Use half your normal amount of salad dressing and sprinkle the whole salad liberally with vinegar.

### If eating at a finer restaurant:

- 1** Tell the chef you are on a low-salt/low-fat diet. Ask that no salt be added to your meal, including vegetables. Despite no added salt, you will likely consume 700-1200mg of sodium at the meal depending upon bread, soup, gravy/sauce and salad dressing consumption.
- 2** Order grilled, baked or broiled fresh meats and fresh vegetables with no salt added. This includes the potato. Enjoy a little sour cream on your potato that is low in sodium and has less fat than butter.
- 3** Similar to buffet-style restaurants, limit portions at the salad bar. Avoid or limit pickled-style or mayonnaise-based foods. Both choices have excess sodium and fat. Perhaps a tablespoon of one or two would satisfy a craving!
- 4** Limit bread consumption. One slice of bread has approximately 120mg of sodium, one hamburger bun contains 180-250mg sodium.



For more ideas on low sodium eating and other living with heart failure tips, check out <http://aahfnpatienteducation.com/>