



# LIVING WITH CIRRHOSIS: LOW SODIUM DIET

## DIET TIPS & GUIDANCE

Sodium (also known as salt) controls fluid balance in our bodies and maintains blood volume and blood pressure. Eating too much sodium may raise blood pressure and cause fluid retention. **The best diet for Cirrhosis is a low-sodium and high-protein diet.**

### GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR CUTTING DOWN ON SALT

- 1. Eliminate salty foods** from your diet and reduce the amount of salt used in cooking. **Sea salt is no better than regular salt.**
- 2. Choose low sodium. Low sodium is defined as 140 mg** of sodium per serving.
- 3. Be creative and season your foods with spices, herbs, lemon, garlic, ginger, vinegar and pepper.**
- 4. Remove the saltshaker from the table.**
- 5. Eat more home-cooked meals.** Foods cooked from scratch are naturally lower in sodium than most instant and boxed mixes.
- 6. Avoid medications** that contain sodium, such as Alka Seltzer and Bromo Seltzer.



## WHAT CAN I EAT ON A LOW-SALT DIET?

### Meat and Eggs

- Any fresh or frozen beef, pork, poultry or fish
- Eggs
- Low-sodium peanut butter

### Dairy

- Milk, yogurt & ice cream
- Low-sodium cheese (i.e. cream cheese, ricotta cheese, mozzarella, low-sodium cottage cheese)

### Grains/Starches:

- Breads, bagels & rolls without salted tops
- Muffins & cereals
- All rice & pasta
- Low-sodium corn & flour tortillas
- Unsalted popcorn, chips & pretzels

### Vegetables/Fruits

- Fresh and frozen vegetables
- Low-sodium canned vegetables, sauces & juices
- Most fresh, frozen & canned fruit
- Dried fruits

## FOODS TO LIMIT OR AVOID

- Smoked, cured, salted or canned meat & fish
- Frozen breaded meats/dinners
- Canned entrees (i.e. ravioli)
- Buttermilk & processed cheese
- Bleu, feta & other salty cheeses
- Quick breads, biscuits, pancakes & waffle mixes
- Pizza & croutons
- Salted crackers
- Pre-packaged mixes for potatoes, rice & pasta
- Regular canned vegetables & vegetable juices
- Commercially prepared pasta & tomato sauces
- Olives, pickles & sauerkraut

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715.847.2558 or [giassoc.org](http://giassoc.org)

## HOW DO I KNOW HOW MUCH SALT IS IN EACH ITEM?



### Step 1:

Check the serving size and number of servings in the package.

(The serving size tells you how much food is considered one serving).

### Step 2:

Check the amount of sodium in one serving.

## QUIZ TIME...

**How much sodium does the average American eat each day?**

Answer: Five (or more) teaspoons

**How much sodium does your body need every day?**

Answer: 1/4 teaspoon

**If I am on a low-sodium diet, how much salt can I eat per day?**

Answer: Two grams of salt (sodium), which is 2,000 mg of salt per day (or one teaspoon of salt)

## HIGH-PROTEIN DIET

### 1. Why do I need to follow a high-protein diet?

Cirrhosis is a **catabolic disease**, meaning that you are burning a lot of energy. This means that your calorie and protein needs are higher than before. Some people experience muscle loss due to their body's increased energy needs. A high-protein diet will help prevent this muscle loss.

### 2. How much protein do I need?

The goal is to eat 1 gram of protein for every kilogram of your body weight. **Divide your body weight** in pounds **by 2.2** to find your weight in kilograms.

Example: If you weigh 180 lbs, then you weigh 81 kg. You need about 81 g of protein per day.

### 3. How do I get this much protein?

Six small meals every day (or eating every 2-4 hours while awake).

We also recommend a late evening high-protein snack 1-2 hours before bedtime such as:

- 1 bottle of Boost High Protein, Ensure High Protein or Ensure Enlive (lactose-free)
- Peanut butter on 2 slices of toast
- 1 glass of milk mixed with 1 tablespoon of whey protein powder
- 3/4 cup Greek yogurt with berries
- Apple slices with peanut butter
- Hummus and pita bread
- Unsalted trail mix

## WHAT ARE COMMON HIGH-PROTEIN FOODS AND HOW MUCH PROTEIN DOES EACH SERVING HAVE?

Food Item	Measure	Equivalent to...	Protein (grams)	Sodium/salt (mg)
Beef, pork (cooked)	2.5 oz	Deck of cards	25 grams	45 grams
Chicken (cooked)	2.5 oz	Deck of cards	20 grams	50 mgs
Fish (baked, fried, steamed)	2.5 oz	Deck of cards	18 grams	20 mgs
Egg	1 large		6 grams	65 mg
Peanut butter (natural/low salt)	2 tbs	Golf ball	7 grams	2 mg
Milk (skim, 1%, 2%, whole)	1 cup		9 grams	105 mg
Greek yogurt (plain, flavored)	3/4 cup	Tennis ball	16 grams	65 mg
Mozzarella cheese (from block)	1.5 oz	9-volt battery	10 grams	186 mg
Swiss cheese	1.5 oz	9-volt battery	14 grams	96 mg
Meal supplement drinks (i.e. Boost)	1 bottle		12-15 grams	200-290 mg
Pita bread	1 each		7 grams	372 mg