



Low-Salt Diet for Vertigo

How does what I eat affect my dizziness?

The concentration of certain substances in your blood will affect the make-up of your inner-ear fluid. If you eat foods high in salt or sugar, your blood levels of salt and sugar increase as well, which, in turn, affects the composition of your inner ear fluid. Certain disorders that cause dizziness, vertigo, and imbalance, are aggravated by increased salt intake. Limiting salt intake can control your symptoms. In addition, decreasing or avoiding use of caffeine and alcohol will also help improve your symptoms.

Dietary goals

The goal of dietary modifications is to provide stable body fluid/blood levels so that fluctuations in the inner-ear fluid can be avoided, thereby improving or preventing symptoms.

1. **Distribute your food and fluid intake evenly throughout the day and from day to day.** Eat approximately the same amount of food at each meal and do not skip meals. If you eat snacks, have them at regular times.
2. **Avoid eating foods or fluids that have a high salt content.** High salt intake results in fluctuations in the inner-ear fluid pressure and may increase your symptoms. Do not add salt to food! Aim for a diet high in fresh fruits, vegetables and whole grains, and low in canned, frozen or processed foods. A two-gram sodium intake diet is usually what we recommend. One teaspoon of table salt has about two grams of sodium. Note that sodium (one of the two elements in table salt) is not exactly the same as sodium chloride (salt). A two gram "salt" diet is not what is intended. This website: <http://www.myfitnesspal.com>, has a diet diary program that can be configured to track sodium.
3. **Drink adequate amounts of fluid daily.** This should include water, milk and low-sugar fruit juices (for example, cranberry or cranapple). Try to anticipate fluid loss which will occur with exercise or heat, and replace these fluids before they are lost. Be cautious about milk intake—some individuals have food allergies and may experience symptoms from milk products.
4. **Avoid caffeine-containing fluids and foods** (such as coffee, tea and chocolate). Caffeine has stimulant properties that may make your symptoms worse. Caffeine also may make tinnitus louder. Large amounts of caffeine may trigger migraine (migraine can be difficult to separate from Meniere's disease). Chocolate is also a migraine trigger.
5. **Limit your alcohol intake to one glass of beer or wine each day.** Alcohol may trigger migraine-associated vertigo.
6. **Avoid foods containing MSG (monosodium glutamate).** This is often present in pre-packaged food products and in Chinese food. It may increase symptoms in some patients, possibly because of the link to migraine-associated vertigo, and also because it contains sodium.

Drug Considerations

1. **Avoid aspirin and medications that contain aspirin.** Aspirin can cause tinnitus (abnormal noise in the ear). Check with your doctor first before stopping aspirin if you take it daily. Nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory agents such as ibuprofen or naproxen should also be avoided when practical.
2. **Avoid caffeine-containing medications.** Caffeine can increase tinnitus as well as have the problems mentioned above under foods.
3. **Pay attention to the content of all over-the-counter medications as well as drugs prescribed by other physicians.** Some medications may increase your symptoms.

Where can I get additional help in modifying my diet?

Dietitians can help you work out a nutritional program that meets your special needs. They can also suggest ways to prepare your favorite foods for a restricted-salt or low-sugar diet. With their assistance, you'll find that modifying your eating habits can

help you control the symptoms of your balance disorder.

Apps available on smartphones as well as websites on the internet can be of great help in tracking sodium. We do not advertise on this site, but nevertheless many of our patients have mentioned the “myfitnesspal.com” website as a useful resource.

Food Group	Foods to Avoid	Low-Salt Foods
Dairy	Buttermilk, cocoa mix, processed cheese	Skim or low-fat milk, low-fat yogurt, low-sodium cheeses
Meat	Canned, salted, or smoked meats and fish, oil-packed tuna, bacon, ham, bologna, salami, cold cuts, hot dogs, canned stew	Lean meats, poultry, fish, water-packed tuna
Vegetables	Canned vegetables and vegetable juices, canned soups, olives, pickles	Fresh, frozen or low-sodium canned vegetables and juices, low-salt soups
Bread	Salted crackers, pizza, baked goods with salt	Whole-grain or enriched breads and cereals, low-salt crackers and bread sticks
Snacks	Potato and other chips, pretzels, salted nuts and snack mixes	Unsalted popcorn, fresh or dried fruit
Other	Ketchup, mustard, soy sauce, MSG, bouillon cubes, meat sauces, commercial salad dressings, frozen/read-made meals, fast food	Salad bars

Additional Information:

<https://menieres.org/menieres-disease-diet/low-sodium-diet-for-menieres-disease/>

<https://www.healthline.com/health/meniere-disease-diet#symptoms>

<https://muschealth.org/medical-services/ent/otology/vertigo/eating-well>