

# Achieve

A Newsletter  
for AvMed  
Members

## ▶ YOUR HEALTHIEST LIFE WITH HEART FAILURE

### Are electrolyte drinks safe for people with CHF?

**L**iving with congestive heart failure (CHF) is all about balance.

You have to drink enough fluids to stay hydrated. But drinking too much fluid can worsen CHF symptoms. Your body needs sodium, an essential electrolyte that helps your nerves and muscles work properly. But too much sodium can lead to high blood pressure and fluid retention. It's crucial to pick the right drinks to maintain this balance.

Electrolytes are minerals, such as magnesium, sodium, and potassium, that play a key role in maintaining a healthy heart. Sports drinks such as Gatorade and Pedialyte claim to replenish lost

electrolytes in dozens of tasty flavors. But are they safe for people with CHF?

Experts say no. Sports drinks contain too much salt and sugar to be a healthy choice for CHF patients. The American Heart Association recommends that CHF patients limit their sodium intake to 1,500 mg per day or less. But there are 270 mg of sodium in a 20 oz bottle of Gatorade. That's 11% of the recommended daily amount.

What's more, researchers in a 2023 *Nutrients* study found a link between drinking sports drinks and obesity, a CHF risk factor.

So, what should you drink instead? Water is always the best option. Other low-sodium choices include:

- 100% fruit juices
- Low- or no-sodium tomato or vegetable juice
- 1% or skim milk

Your doctor can suggest a meal plan to help you safely balance electrolytes.





## Your CHF medications cheat sheet

**T**aking your medications as prescribed is an important part of your congestive heart failure treatment plan. But juggling multiple medications can be overwhelming without a plan. These handy tips can help you keep track of your CHF medications and dosages.

### 1. Make friends with your pharmacist

Having one pharmacist means they'll know exactly what you take and when you need your prescriptions refilled. They can check for interactions with any other medicines you use.

### 2. Get a pill organizer

Plastic pill organizers have separate boxes divided by days of the week — or even by morning and night — so you can see whether you've missed any doses.

### 3. Set an alarm

You can set a phone alarm to remind you when to take your medication.

### 4. Go old-school

Grab a calendar or notebook and jot down your medicines — and the time you need to take them — each day. Then check them off.

### 5. Ask for pill packets

Your pharmacist may be able to provide your medications in individual pill packets labeled with the date and time you need to take them, so there's no confusion on your end.

### 6. Connect your medications to your daily activities

Do you brew a pot of coffee every morning? Set your medications next to your coffeepot. Find something you do at the same time every single day and use that as a reminder to help you form a habit.

## Case Manager Spotlight

**Marybel Rios** has been a Disease Management Case Manager with AvMed for two years.

"My favorite thing about being a Case Manager is filling gaps in health care that make a big difference in members' lives."



**To reach us, please call 1-833-609-0735.**



## Healthy Eating Made Simple

Elizabeth Ferrer, R.D., AvMed's Registered Dietitian, shares her favorite tips for happier, healthier meals — without feeling deprived.

### Fresh vs. canned vs. frozen

**S**ome people may think “fresh is best” when it comes to fruits and vegetables. But frozen and canned foods can be nutritious options, too. Because they have a longer shelf life than fresh produce, they're ready to use when you need them. (Just be sure to take note of the expiration dates.)

Here, we're busting some common myths about the canned and frozen food aisles.

#### **MYTH FROZEN AND CANNED FOOD ISN'T AS HEALTHY AS FRESH FOOD.**

**Fact:** Some frozen and canned foods have more vitamins and minerals than their fresh-food counterparts. That's because freezing and canning locks in nutrition at peak freshness. You can



search fresh food nutrient content on the USDA website (<https://fdc.nal.usda.gov>) and compare to the nutrition facts on your canned or frozen food items. Focus on iron, potassium, vitamin D, and calcium.

#### **MYTH FROZEN AND CANNED FOOD DOESN'T TASTE AS GOOD.**

**Fact:** Certain canned and frozen foods can lose flavor and texture. But they're

perfect for soups, stews, and more. Take canned chickpeas, for example. They aren't designed to be eaten by the handful. But when you mash them up with olive oil, tahini, and lemon juice, you've got a tasty hummus.

#### **MYTH ALL FROZEN AND CANNED FOODS ARE ULTRA-PROCESSED.**

**Fact:** Some canned and frozen foods contain added sodium, sugar, and saturated fat. You can shop smarter by reading the labels. Look for options that have fewer than five ingredients. Choose fruit that's canned in water or its own juice instead of syrup. Look for low- or no-sodium versions. Rinsing canned food before eating it is an easy way to reduce sodium.

#### **Unencrypted email makes it easier to communicate with your case manager!**

To opt in, scan the QR code with your phone. Log in or register to the member portal and select “Set My Preferences.”



## The right care at the right time

When you need quick care, these AvMed services will be on standby.

### Access your account 24/7

Register or log in at [AvMed.org](https://www.avmed.org).

### Call Member Engagement Center

1-800-782-8633 (TTY/TDD: 711)

Hours: 7 days a week, from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.

#### Nurse On Call

**1-888-866-5432**  
Speak to a registered nurse at any time of day or night about a non-life-threatening illness or injury.

#### MDLive Virtual Visits

**1-800-400-MDLIVE** or **MDLive.com/AvMed**  
Speak with a licensed doctor virtually or by phone from your own home 24/7/365 for non-emergency symptoms. Prescriptions will be sent to your local pharmacy.

#### Dispatch Health

**786-791-8697** or **DispatchHealth.com**  
Licensed medical professionals come to you ready to treat urgent issues such as cuts and infections. Call 8 a.m. to 10 p.m. daily to determine if they are available in your area.

#### Urgent Care Center

If you think you have bronchitis, an infection, an allergic reaction, or need wound care, visit an urgent care center if your physician is unavailable. To find an in-network care center, go to **AvMed.org**.

#### Emergency Department

If you suspect you are having a heart attack or stroke, or you have uncontrollable bleeding, don't wait: Call **911** or go to the emergency room.