

Meniere's Diet

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Dietary Goals

The overall goal is to provide stable fluid/blood levels so that secondary fluctuations in the inner ear fluid can be avoided. To achieve this follow these guidelines:

- Distribute your food intake evenly throughout the day, and from day to day.
- Avoid foods high in sugar and/or salt. Aim for a diet high in fresh fruits, vegetables, and whole grains, and low in canned, frozen and processed foods.
- Drink adequate amounts of fluid daily (water, milk and low sugar fruit juices). Coffee, tea and soft drinks should not be counted as part of this intake.
- Avoid caffeine-containing foods such as coffee, tea and chocolate. Caffeine is a bladder irritant that can cause excessive urinary loss of fluid and dehydration. Caffeine itself is also a common trigger for attacks.
- Limit or eliminate alcohol intake. Alcohol can affect the inner ear directly, changing the volume and concentration of the inner ear fluid and increasing symptoms.
- Avoid foods containing MSG (monosodium glutamate). This is often present in prepackaged foods and in Chinese foods and can increase symptoms in some patients.
- Keeping a food/drink diary for a period of time may allow you to identify specific foods or fluids that worsen your disease.

Drug considerations

- Avoid aspirin and medications that contain aspirin
- Avoid caffeine-containing medications
- Pay attention to the content of all over-the-counter and herbal medications as well as drugs prescribed for other problems. Some may increase your symptoms.
- Avoid cigarettes. The nicotine present in cigarettes constricts blood vessels and will decrease the blood supply to the inner ear, making symptoms worse.

Low salt diet

The recommend daily intake for sodium chloride (the technical name for salt) is less than 2,300mg (1 teaspoon) a day. Evidence exists that restricting sodium chloride to 1,000mg a day may help those with Meniere's Disease.

Eating less salt does not have to be difficult. Following are five keys to decreasing salt in your diet:

- Read labels, especially on processed foods, to see how much sodium chloride (salt) foods contain.
- Ask for low-salt meals at restaurants.
- If you use canned vegetables, rinse them thoroughly.
- Call your local water company to find out the salt content of your water supply. If you drink bottled water, read the label and choose a salt-free brand.
- Don't add salt to your food or cooking water.