



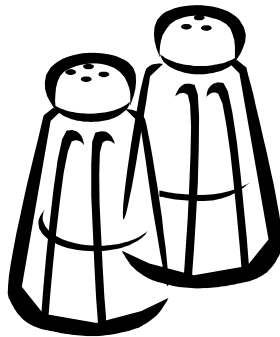
Are You Sodium Savvy?

Nearly all Americans eat too much salt (sodium). Most of the salt comes from eating processed foods (75%), or adding salt to food while cooking and using the salt shaker at meals (5% to 10%). On average, the more salt a person eats, the higher his or her blood pressure. Eating less salt is an important way to reduce the risk of high blood pressure, which may in turn reduce the risk of heart disease, stroke, congestive heart failure, and kidney damage. To reduce the amount of sodium in your diet, eat less processed food and use less salt while cooking and at the table.

High sodium diets may increase the risks of a person developing hypertension, cardiovascular disease or stroke.

Sodium: How much do you need?

The 2010 Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommend limiting sodium to less than 2,300 mg a day — or 1,500 mg if you're age 51 or older, or if you are black, or if you have high blood pressure, diabetes or chronic kidney disease.



Older adults should aim for no more than 1,500 milligrams of sodium each day.

This is about 3/4 teaspoon of salt. You should also try to get 4,700 milligrams of potassium each day. Keep in mind that these are upper limits, and less is usually best, especially if you're sensitive to the effects of sodium. If you aren't sure how much sodium your diet should include, talk to your doctor.

If you are interested in reducing your sodium intake, here are some helpful tips.

- When you're choosing packaged foods, check the sodium content on the Nutrition Facts label. Focus on the milligrams of sodium in each serving. Use the percent Daily Value (% DV) to help limit your sodium intake. Five percent DV or less is low and 20% DV or more is high. You don't want to exceed a total of 65% DV for sodium from all foods in a day. Sixty-five percent DV is 1,500 milligrams of sodium.
- Compare sodium content for similar foods. This can really make a difference. Use the Nutrition Facts label to select brands that are lower in sodium.
- Choose low-sodium foods that may cut the sodium in half from the regular food. Most restaurants offer heart-healthy choices on their menus.
- Use a salt substitute when cooking. Herbs and spices are also a great substitute for salt to add flavor to dishes.
- Avoid salting food before you taste it. Moderation is the key!
- Choose the unsalted versions of foods like nuts, seeds and beans. Eat more fresh fruits and vegetables that have not been processed or preserved. These will have less sodium than the canned fruits and vegetables.

Adapted from the following sources:

Sodium: How to Tame your salt intake now. From Mayo Clinic at <http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/sodium/NU00284>

Older Adult Health Facts: Sodium and Potassium. From Dietary Guidelines for Americans at www.health.gov

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