

How to reduce SODIUM in your DIET



Health care experts recommend that you reduce the amount of sodium you take in each day. The main source of sodium is from salt (sodium chloride).

They have made this recommendation because too much sodium in our food contributes to our risk of hypertension (high blood pressure). High blood pressure is a significant risk factor for stroke.

This brochure outlines ten ways to help you reduce your salt and overall sodium intake.

10 ways to reduce sodium in your diet.

1. It's all in the name The main source of sodium is salt. Limit all forms of salt. Another name for salt is sodium. Whether it is garlic salt, sea salt, seasoning salt or table salt, the effects on your body are the same. If either sodium or salt is listed in the ingredients, it is a good indication that the product is high in salt! Other ingredients to watch out for are MSG, baking soda, baking powder and brine.

2. If you want it done right – do it yourself! Find creative ways to make tasty low-sodium foods at home. By limiting restaurant and fast foods, you will decrease your daily sodium intake! Look for low sodium cookbooks or visit the Heart and Stroke website for recipe ideas.

3. Watch for hidden sodium – it's sneaky! Sauces, condiments, processed foods and deli or cured meats tend to be very high in sodium. Items such as soy sauce, hoisin sauce, ketchup, olives, pickles, ham, bacon, corned beef, canned goods (especially canned soups!), frozen entrees, salad dressings and seasoned pasta or rice mixes are often high in sodium.

4. Shake that habit! Gradually reduce salt added during cooking - and at the table. It is hard to remove salt abruptly from your diet as it takes time for your taste buds to adjust. Eventually, you will be able to put away the salt shaker.

5. Nutrition Facts Table Use the Nutrition Facts Table to see how many milligrams (mg) of sodium are in each serving. When reading food labels, look for 125 mg of sodium or less per serving.

Avoid consuming more than 1500 mg of sodium per day.
(1 tsp salt has 2300 mg of sodium)



6. Ten Foods To Watch The following foods are sources of high sodium. The percentage of daily sodium intake they contain is included in the brackets:

Pizza, sandwiches, submarines, hamburgers and hotdogs (19.1%), Soups (7.4%), Pasta (5.7%), Liquid milk and milk-based beverages (4.0%), Poultry and poultry dishes (3.8%), Potatoes (3.4%), Cheese (3.2%), Cereals (3.0%), Beef (3.0%), Sauces (2.9%) [Learn more at www.sodium101.ca](http://www.sodium101.ca).

7. Is your food what it claims to be? Look for foods labeled as low sodium or sodium free. Beware when an item is labeled as "sodium reduced", "lower in salt", or "no added salt". These products may still be high in sodium or salt!

8. Savour the flavour without the salt! There are a variety of ways to flavour your foods without salt. Try herbs, spices, lemon, onion, or pureed fruits. Salt substitutes may be used, but check with your doctor first as some are high in potassium and not appropriate for everyone.

9. Be Restaurant Savvy! Request that no salt be added to your food. Ask for dressings, gravies, sauces or condiments "on the side," and add sparingly yourself if needed. Check out the nutrition information online before you go, or request a nutrition facts brochure at the restaurant to assess the salt situation yourself!

10. Eat Well With Canada's Food Guide. Of course, low sodium is not the only key to healthy eating. Canada's Food Guide can help you choose a variety of foods from each of the 4 food groups: vegetables and fruit, grain products, milk and alternatives, meat and alternatives. Select foods that are lower in fat and sugar, and limit your intake of high calorie food and drinks. Information on healthy eating is available from your public health unit or at <http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fn-an/food-guide-aliment/index-eng.php>.



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These recommendations are meant as general guidelines for a healthy adult. In certain medical conditions or for athletes who are very active, sodium or salt restriction may not be appropriate. Please talk to your doctor if you are unsure.