

SALT

Can Shake Up Your Health

THIS IS ONE FLAVOR ENHANCER
YOU SHOULD DO WITHOUT

Too much salt and sodium can lead to or worsen high blood pressure which raises the risk for heart disease and stroke. What is too much?

- More than 1,500 mg of sodium per day, or only half a teaspoon of salt, if you are over the age of 51, African American, or if you have high blood pressure, diabetes, or chronic kidney disease
- More than 2,300 mg of sodium a day for all others

WHERE'S THE SALT AND SODIUM?

Table salt, of course. One teaspoon of salt (sodium chloride) has about 2,300 milligrams of sodium. But most of the sodium eaten comes from processed, packaged, and restaurant foods. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) found that about half of the sodium people eat comes from ten types of foods:

- Breads and rolls
- Cold cuts and cured meats
- Pizza
- Poultry
- Soups
- Sandwiches
- Cheese
- Pasta dishes
- Meat dishes
- Snacks



Action Step

Spice up your life without salt. Use seasonings, such as bay leaf, marjoram, curry powder, garlic, and lemon juice for your meats. Add cinnamon, cloves, dill, rosemary, and tarragon to your vegetables.

ASSAULT ON SALT TIPS

- Remove the salt shaker from the table. If you've been used to the taste of salt, give yourself time to adjust to the missing flavor.
- Buy fresh, rather than packaged and processed foods.
- Eat more home-prepared meals and less fast food, take-out, and restaurant meals.
- When you eat out, ask that salt not be added to your foods.
- Use little or no salt when cooking. Kosher salt and sea salt count.
- Read nutrition labels closely. Choose foods with the words "low sodium" or "no salt added."
- Go easy on condiments, such as soy sauce, pickles, olives, ketchup, and mustard. Use ones lower in sodium.

Use herbs, spices, and salt-free seasoning blends in cooking and on the table.



Shake Salt Out of Your Diet

Before refrigeration, salt served as a valuable way to preserve food. Unfortunately, in some people, high-sodium diets are linked to high blood pressure and an accumulation of fluid, called edema. (Salt is 40 percent sodium and 60 percent chlorine. Together they form sodium chloride.)

The taste for salt is acquired, not inborn. So it's possible to wean yourself off salt with no ill effects. We've already suggested you make salt-free soups. Here are some other ideas.

- Put away your salt shaker, and forget about using it while cooking or at the table.
- Use less seasoned salt, soy sauce, barbecue sauce, and other salty condiments.
- Buy only unsalted varieties of snack foods.
- Avoid foods prepared with salt brine like pickles, olives, or sauerkraut.
- Limit foods like smoked fish, kippered herring, anchovies, sardines, and caviar.
- Prepare meals from fresh ingredients instead of relying heavily on commercial products that contain salt or other sodium compounds.
- When dining out, ask that foods be made to order, with no salt.