



Sodium and Your Health

What is sodium?

Sodium is a mineral found in food and salt. Our bodies need some sodium for proper water balance in the body, but we tend to eat much more than we need.

Why should we eat less sodium?



Even if you never use the salt shaker, you might be getting too much sodium.

Too much sodium can lead to **high blood pressure**, which is a major risk factor for stroke, heart disease and kidney disease.

Steps we can take to lower sodium intake

- Choose fresh foods such as fruits, vegetables, seafood, eggs, and meat often
- Make meals at home - use little to no salt.
- Limit: processed and prepared foods, deli meat, pickled foods, salty snacks, sauces.

Unprocessed	Processed
Cucumber, 7 slices = 2 mg	Dill Pickle, 1 medium = 569 mg
Tomato, 1 small = 14 mg	Tomato Soup, 1 cup = 960 mg
Pork Tenderloin, 3 oz = 58 mg	Ham, 3 oz = 1095 mg

- Look for products labelled ‘no salt added’, ‘low sodium’, or ‘sodium reduced’
- Season food with herbs, spices, citrus juices, garlic, onion, dry mustard, or vinegars
- Eat out less often – ask for low sodium menu items when choosing to eat out.

Over time, our taste buds can adjust to prefer less salt. Try it and see for yourself!

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Food Items	High Sodium Foods - Limit	Lower Sodium Foods ✓Good Choices
Snack foods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Salted crackers • Corn or tortilla chips • Potato chips • Salted popcorn • Salted pretzels • Salted nuts • Salted sunflower seeds 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unsalted crackers • Rice cakes • Unsalted corn or tortilla chips • Unsalted chips • Unsalted popcorn • Unsalted pretzels.
Meat and Seafood	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ham, bacon, salt pork, hot dogs, sausage, salami, pastrami, corned beef, cold cuts, bologna, deli meats, spam • Smoked salmon, lox • Pickled herring, anchovies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fresh beef, wild meat (moose, elk, bison), pork, chicken, turkey • Fish, fresh seafood • Eggs • Lower sodium deli meats such as oven roasted turkey or beef • Canned tuna and salmon without added salt
Cheese and Milk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Processed cheese, cheese slices, cheese spreads, cottage cheese, cheese whiz • Parmesan, blue cheese, feta, and buttermilk 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cream cheese, goat cheese • Block type cheese such as Swiss, cheddar, and mozzarella
Pickled Foods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pickles, relish, sauerkraut • Olives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cucumber or other vegetables in vinegar, • Unsalted commercial pickles (check labels)
Soup, Vegetables and Tomato Products	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Canned and packaged soup, instant soup, instant noodle soup • Canned vegetables and canned tomatoes with added salt • Frozen vegetables with sauces 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Homemade low sodium soup • Unsalted canned vegetables • Fresh and frozen vegetables • Unsalted canned tomato products
Pre-prepared	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commercial TV dinners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commercial TV dinners with less

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Foods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Canned spaghetti and ravioli, canned chili • Packaged macaroni and cheese (Kraft Dinner™), • Frozen prepared foods • Hamburger Helper™ • Commercial salad dressing • Instant hot cereal 	<p>than 600 mg sodium per portion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Homemade casseroles made with fresh, frozen or unsalted ingredients and low salt seasonings • Homemade salad dressings • Quick or long cook cereal (mush)
Seasonings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Table salt, sea salt, garlic salt, onion salt, celery salt, seasoning salt such as Vege-Sal™, Lite salt, lemon pepper (with salt) • Meat tenderizer such as Adolph's™, flavor enhancer (MSG), bouillon cubes (OXO™, Bovril™) • Marmite™, Veg-mite™ • Sushi vinegar 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fresh and dried spices and herbs such as fresh garlic, fresh ginger, garlic powder, fresh onion (green and white), onion powder, dry mustard, pepper • Salt-free seasonings such as Mrs. Dash™ and McCormick's No Salt Added™ • Wasabi, lemon and lime juice, vinegars, cooking wine, chili oil, sesame oil
Sauces and Salad Dressings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Barbeque sauce, soy sauce, steak sauce, teriyaki sauce, oyster sauce, fish sauce • Commercial salad dressings • Ketchup, prepared mustard • Commercial salsa 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Homemade or low-sodium sauces • Salad dressing with less than 100 mg sodium per tablespoon • Homemade salsa, • Vinegar • Hot Sauces

Sodium Comparison of 1 Day Menu

Higher Sodium Menu	Sodium (mg)*	Lower Sodium Menu	Sodium (mg)*
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Breakfast		Breakfast	
Egg, boiled.....	50	Egg, boiled.....	50
Bacon, 1 slice.....	210	Cooked steel cut oats, ½ cup	0
Whole grain bread*, 2 slices.....	280	Whole grain bread*, 1 slice.....	140
Milk, 1 cup.....	60	Milk, 1 cup.....	60
Soft margarine, 1 tsp.....	40	Unsalted butter, 1 tsp.....	0
Peanut butter*, 1 Tbsp.....	70	Peanut butter (unsalted) 1 Tbsp....	3
Snack		Snack	
Pear, sliced.....	0	Pear, sliced.....	0
Greek yogurt, ¾ cup.....	40	Greek yogurt, ¾ cup.....	40
Lunch		Lunch	
Ham salad sandwich:		Chicken salad sandwich:	
• Ham, chopped, 3 oz.....	1095	• Chicken, chopped, 3 oz.....	75
• Mayonnaise, 1 Tbsp.....	100	• Mayonnaise, 1 Tbsp.....	100
• Celery, minced, ¼ cup.....	0	• Celery, minced, ¼ cup.....	0
• Whole grain bread*, 2 slices..	280	• Whole grain bread*, 2 slices.....	280
Vegetable soup, ½ can.....	750	Vegetable soup, low sodium, ½ can	60
Milk, 1 cup.....	70	Milk, 1 cup.....	70
Snack		Snack	
Salted nuts.....	110	Unsalted nuts.....	0
Orange, medium.....	0	Orange, medium.....	0
Dinner		Dinner	
Lean ground beef, 3 oz.....	60	Salmon with lemon, 3 oz.....	40
Pasta sauce*, 1/3 cup.....	400	Brown rice, 1 cup.....	5
Whole wheat pasta, 1 1/2 cup	0	Broccoli, steamed, 1 cup.....	60
Parmesan, 1 Tbsp.....	80	Sweet Potato, steamed, ½ cup.....	0
Broccoli, steamed	60		
Snack		Snack	
Cheese whiz, 1 Tbsp.....	260	Cheddar cheese, 1 oz.....	175
Salted cracker, 4.....	130	Rye crisp, 3.....	75
Day's Total	4145	Day's Total	1233

*The milligrams (mg) of sodium are approximate and will vary from brand to brand. Please check the nutrition facts table for more accurate information

Read the nutrition facts table on food packages. Compare the amount of sodium by the “DV” (daily value) to the list below to guide your choices:

< 10% sodium = a good low sodium choice

>15% = limit or avoid, very high in sodium

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How can I eat less sodium when eating out?

- Choose restaurants that will prepare food without salt.
- Ask for gravy, sauce and dressing on the side and eat less of them.
- **Sandwiches:** choose fillings of vegetables, roast beef, roast turkey or chicken, egg, or fish. Avoid ham, processed meats (i.e. salami, pastrami, bologna, corned beef), processed cheese (i.e. sliced cheese) and pickles.
- **Italian:** Avoid Parmesan or Romano cheese, olives, smoked meats and ham. Try polenta, ravioli filled with vegetables or meat instead of cheese, veal piccata, fresh garden salad (insalata) or ratatouille.
- **Pizzas:** Most pizzas are high in salt. A vegetarian pizza made with real mozzarella cheese and fresh vegetables ("hold the olives") is the lowest in salt. Avoid processed meat such as ham.
- **Chinese:** Choose plain stir-fries instead of those with heavy sauces such as black bean, hoisin or oyster sauce. Ask for "light" or "reduced sodium" soy sauce **on the side**. Dishes prepared with hot mustard, sweet and sour, plum or duck sauces have less sodium (but may be higher in sugar). Choose steamed rice or noodles instead of fried or mixed with sauces. Request that monosodium glutamate (MSG) or soy sauce not be added when the food is prepared. Try dim sum (steamed dumplings filled with meat, seafood and/or vegetables, sweet paste and preserves).
- **Japanese:** Try "shabu shabu" (meat and vegetables prepared without soy sauce) or sushi rolls filled with cucumber, mushrooms, meat, fish or seafood. For lots of flavor without salt, try wasabi or hot horseradish.
- **Hamburgers:** Choose tomato, onion and lettuce. Do not order processed cheese. It's okay to use a small amount of ketchup, mustard and relish.
- **Fish and chips:** Ask for unsalted fries. Try lemon or vinegar instead of salt and ketchup. If the fish batter tastes salty, eat only a small amount. The best choice is a grilled fish.