

Low Sodium (Salt) Eating

Why Low Sodium Eating is Important

This resource is designed to help you choose foods that are lower in sodium (salt). Low sodium eating will help prevent high blood pressure, help keep your bones strong and may lower your risk for getting kidney stones. Increased blood pressure has been linked to several chronic diseases such as stroke, heart disease and kidney disease. Your daily sodium intake should be less than 2300 mg per day. If you have high blood pressure you should aim for 1500-2300 mg of sodium per day. These tips will help you to lower your sodium intake (to less than 2300 mg per day).



Steps You Can Take

To lower sodium intake:

1. Read the Nutrition Facts box on packaged foods and choose foods lower in sodium. Low in sodium means the food contains less than 140 mg sodium per serving. Reduced in sodium means the food contains 25% or less sodium than the regular version of that food product.
2. Added salt at the table and in cooking should be replaced with low sodium herbs, spices, seasonings, and other flavourings. Use fresh or dried garlic, onions, and ginger instead of salty seasonings (such as sea salt, garlic salt, onion salt, MSG).
3. Buy unprocessed fresh or frozen foods more often (meats, fish, vegetables, fruits, dried beans, peas and lentils, nuts and seeds).
4. When buying canned foods, choose ones with no salt added.
5. Limit fast foods and “convenience” foods (such as seasoned pasta or rice mixes), and canned foods (such as stews and vegetables).
6. Limit processed meats (such as ham, turkey roll); cured meats (such as bacon, corned beef); processed cheese and cheese spreads; pickles, condiments (ketchup, mustard) and salty sauces (soy sauce).

This information is not meant to replace advice from your medical doctor or individual counseling with a registered dietitian. It is intended for educational and informational purposes only.

Other Tips

Check with your doctor before:

- Using salt substitutes (for example: Half Salt®, No Salt®) as they can contain high amounts of sodium and potassium.
- Taking medications (including laxatives and antacids) or home remedies (baking soda), as these can be high in sodium.

If you are a competitive athlete or working in a job where you sweat a lot (i.e. fire fighter), you may need more salt in your diet to replace sweat losses.



Additional Resources

- Canadian Diabetes Association, Dietitians of Canada, "Healthy Eating is in Store for You - Nutrition Labelling Fact Sheets"
www.healthyeatingisinstore.ca/pdf/ENG_RGB_FactSheet.pdf

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