

Lowering Sodium Intake

Eating less sodium can help lower blood pressure levels, limit fluid build-up in the body, reduce strain on the heart, and lower risk of kidney disease. The Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommend eating less than 2,300 milligrams (mg) of sodium (or salt) per day. That is equal to about a teaspoon (tsp) of salt a day. If you have kidney or heart disease, your doctor may suggest consuming a lower amount of sodium.

Much of the sodium we eat comes from prepackaged and ready-made foods. It can also come from adding salt to food while cooking or at the table. Lowering the amount of salt in your diet is important for your health. Use the following tips to help you choose foods with less sodium.

1 tsp of salt = 2,300 mg of sodium



	Eat Less	Choose More Often
	Seasonings Table salt, sea salt, garlic salt, onion salt, celery salt, lemon pepper	Fresh or dried herbs, garlic/garlic powder, onion/onion powder, chili pepper, red pepper flakes, vinegar, lemon juice, pepper, ginger
	Condiments Ketchup, barbecue sauce, salad dressings, soy sauce, relish	Low-sodium condiments such as mustard, vinegar, homemade dressings, reduced sodium soy sauce
	Protein Deli meats, sausage, bacon, pepperoni, beef jerky, ham, canned meats, salted nuts	Poultry, fish, seafood, eggs, tofu, beans, peas, unsalted nuts and nut butters, seeds and seed butters
	Grains Bagels, seasoned rice and pasta mixes, pretzels, microwave popcorn, boxed mixes such as biscuits, waffles, pancakes, cakes, or cornbread	Whole grains such as oats, grits, quinoa, whole grain bread, corn tortillas, unsalted popcorn, unseasoned rice/pasta, cereals with less than 300 grams of sodium per serving
	Fruits/Vegetables Vegetable juice, pickled vegetables, french fries, onion rings	Fresh or frozen fruits and vegetables without added sauces or salt
	Dairy Buttermilk, American cheese, processed cheese dips or spreads, cottage cheese, smoked cheese, feta cheese	Mozzarella, Swiss, ricotta, low-fat or fat-free milk or plant milks, yogurt, reduced sodium cheeses

Tips for Eating at Home

- Prepare and cook your own meals at home when you can.
- Choose seasonings that add flavor without salt. Be sure to avoid “salt substitutes” too, as these contain potassium chloride, which can be harmful for people with kidney disease.
- Rinse canned food with water to remove extra salt.
- Pay close attention to the foods you choose while grocery shopping.
 - Food labels can help you make healthy choices. Foods with 140 mg of sodium or less in a serving are good choices. When buying frozen meals, try to find ones that have less than 600 mg of sodium in a serving.
 - Look for labels that say a food is **“sodium-free,” “very low sodium,”** or **“low sodium,”** as these contain lower amounts of sodium.
 - Beware of other labels such as “no salt added,” “reduced sodium,” or “light in sodium.” They may sound like they have less salt, but they may still be high in sodium.

Reading Food Labels

Check the Nutrition Facts labels on prepackaged foods to find out how much sodium is in each serving.

The example food label here is from boxed macaroni and cheese. One cup contains 750 mg of sodium, or 33% of the average adult's daily recommended amount of sodium. This amount is considered high.

Choose foods that have a % Daily Value (%DV) of 5% or less of sodium.



Nutrition Facts

About 3 servings per container

Serving size	2.5 oz (70g/ about 1/3 Box) (Makes about 1 cup)	Per 1 cup prepared*
Calories	per 2.5 oz dry mix 260 %DV**	Per 1 cup prepared* 360 %DV**
Total Fat	2g 3%	12g 16%
Saturated Fat	1g 4%	4g 19%
Trans Fat	0g	0g
Cholesterol	5mg 2%	10mg 3%
Sodium	600mg 26%	750mg 33%
Total Carbohydrate	49g 18%	50g 18%
Dietary Fiber	1g 5%	1g 5%
Total Sugars	7g	8g
Incl. Added Sugars	0g 0%	0g 0%
Protein	9g	10g
Vitamin D	0mcg 0%	0mcg 0%
Calcium	160mg 10%	180mg 15%
Iron	2.8mg 15%	2.9mg 15%
Potassium	280mg 6%	310mg 6%

*As prepared using margarine with 0g Trans Fat and 2% reduced fat milk.

**The % Daily Value (%DV) tells you how much a nutrient in a serving of food contributes to a daily diet. 2,000 calories a day is used for general nutrition advice.

Tips for Dining Out

- Plan ahead. Bring a healthy on-the-go snack, or choose restaurants where foods are made to order. Limit fast food and premade meals, as most of these items are very high in salt.
- Ask for sauces, gravies, and salad dressings on the side, and ask for foods to be made without salt.
- Limit toppings such as extra cheese, croutons, olives, and processed meats. Start off your meal with a salad, and swap out salty sides like fries for other options, like a baked potato, colorful vegetables, or fruit.



Beware of Sodium in Other Forms

- Read food ingredient labels carefully, as sodium may be listed under a different name.
- Other names for sodium include *monosodium glutamate (MSG)*, *sodium citrate*, *sodium caseinate*, *sodium benzoate*, and *disodium phosphate*.

Talk to your doctor if you have questions about how much sodium is safe for you to consume. You can also call Healthmap Solutions at **1-800-481-0474 (TTY: 711)** to learn about enrolling in our Care Navigation program, which will allow you to discuss your health goals with a nurse or registered dietitian. Patients must meet program eligibility requirements to access Healthmap services.

