

Low Sodium Diet Tips

Sodium is a mineral found in table salt and sea salt. It is found in some foods naturally, and in additives or preservatives (including MSG, baking soda/powder and sodium benzoate). Too much sodium intake can cause fluid retention and high blood pressure.



Sodium intake should not exceed 2,300 mg. per day and for many patients a lower limit of 1,500 mg. per day is recommended. Keep in mind that a teaspoon of salt is equal to 2,300 mg. of sodium.

Please note that Sea Salt DOES NOT contain less sodium than table salt. Equal weights of table salt and sea salt contain the same amount of sodium.

Salt and Sodium Saver Tips



➔ Use less sodium in cooking.

Try citrus fruits, vinegar, black pepper, herbs or spices to add flavor to foods because they are very low in sodium. When choosing flavorings and seasonings, make sure that your choices do not contain the words salt or sodium. For example, choose onion powder instead of onion salt, garlic powder instead of garlic salt, and do not choose seasoning salt. Use sodium free herb blend seasonings instead of seasonings that contain salt or sodium.



➔ Add less sodium at the table.

It may seem difficult at first, but try to use other seasonings rather than salt at the table. There are entire food aisles full of tasty spices: ginger, garlic, cumin, tarragon, basil and on and on which can make your food tasty. As long as it doesn't say salt like garlic salt or seasoned salt they are fine. Condiments and toppings such as ketchup, mustard, pickles, olives, soy sauce, teriyaki sauce, Worcestershire sauce, and steak sauce are very high sodium condiments and should be avoided. Prepared salad dressings are also very high in sodium. Learn to make your own NO salt dressing with olive oil, a vinegar, and lemon juice.

➔ Ask your doctor before using a salt-substitute.

Salt substitutes that look and taste like salt usually contain potassium. Too much potassium can cause serious problems for people who have certain medical conditions. Some medications can require a low potassium intake.



➔ Read food labels.

Reading food labels will show you how much sodium is in the food you eat. The salt content is usually listed per estimated portion size of the food, not per can. What they estimate as a portion size is usually on the low side of what you are going to eat however. If you eat twice as much you are getting twice as much salt

➔ Shop smart.

When shopping, look for “reduced sodium” or “no-added salt” on the food label. Be sure to choose lower sodium versions of canned soup, tomato products, and canned vegetables. And you should ALWAYS use NO salt chicken, beef or vegetable broth.

➔ Snack smart.

Select fresh fruit, fresh vegetables, and unsalted versions of chips, crackers, pretzels or nuts as snacks.



➔ Meats and cheese vary in sodium content.

Eat fresh meats, chicken and fish instead of canned or processed items. Limit intake of lunchmeats, or cured and smoked meats such as ham, bacon, brats, or sausage. Cheese is generally a high sodium food choice, but processed cheeses tend to be the highest.



➔ Be selective when eating out.

When eating out limit or completely avoid all fast foods for they are very high in sodium content. At a restaurant ask for food to be prepared without added salt. Also, ask for dressings or condiments “on the side” so you can control the amount that you eat.

Guidelines for Sodium Intake:

Current recommendations are to limit sodium from all sources to 2,300 mg per day, which is about 600 mg per meal and 100-200 mg per snack. Your doctor or dietitian can tell you the specific limit that is right for you.

Keep in mind that adding just ¼ teaspoon of table salt to foods – about a “pinch” – uses 600 mg of your daily sodium total.

Read labels and remember to multiply the amount of sodium by the number of serving sizes you are eating.