

YOUR GUIDE TO Low Sodium Diet

Sodium is needed to keep fluids balanced in your body and to aid your nerves and muscles. It is a necessary part of your diet, however, it can contribute to high blood pressure, swelling, and retention of water that can lead to an increased risk of stroke, heart attack and kidney disease.

The American Heart Association recommends consuming no more than 1,500 mg of sodium per day. On average, people consume up to five times this amount. You may not realize how much sodium you consume because foods high in sodium do not always taste salty. And did you know that just one teaspoon of table salt equals more than 2,300 milligrams of sodium?

WHY IS SODIUM RELATED TO CARDIOVASCULAR RISK?

Sometimes, your kidneys may not be able to eliminate excess sodium from your body, so the sodium accumulates and retains water in your blood. As your blood volume increases, your heart works harder and your blood pressure rises. This is how excess sodium in your body can lead to heart disease, stroke, kidney disease and congestive heart failure.

HOW MUCH SODIUM IS IN WHAT YOU EAT?

To manage your sodium intake, learn where the sodium comes from by reading food labels and keeping in mind the listed serving size. The following are the main sources of sodium in a usual diet:

Processed and prepared foods

Nearly 80% of the average person's salt intake is from packaged, processed, and restaurant foods. Processed foods include bread, frozen dishes, pizza, cold cuts, bacon, cheese, canned soups and fast foods. For example, did you know that one oat-bran bagel contains 532 milligrams of sodium?

Natural sources

Some foods, such as vegetables, dairy products, meat and certain fish, naturally contain sodium. Keep in mind that taste alone may not tell you which foods are high in sodium. For example, 1 cup of low fat milk has about 125 milligrams of sodium. While this is still a low amount, it should be factored into your overall daily intake.



TIPS TO CUT BACK ON YOUR SODIUM INTAKE:

Decrease your use of salt gradually and your taste buds will adjust. Here's some ways to cut back on the salt:

Eat more fresh foods. Most fresh fruits and vegetables are naturally low in sodium. Frozen plain vegetables (without added sauces) are good too. Also, fresh meat is lower in sodium than packaged meat, such as bacon, hot dogs, sausage and ham. Buy plain whole grain rice and pasta and make your own soups from scratch.

Avoid convenience foods such as canned soups, pre-packaged dinners, pasta and rice mixes, instant cereals and puddings, and gravy mixes. Home-cooked meals from scratch will be naturally lower in sodium than most instant and boxed mixes

Opt for 'low sodium', 'reduced sodium', or 'no salt added' products when available.

Remove salt from recipes whenever possible. Use herbs, spices, garlic, vinegar, pepper, and citrus juices instead of salt to season your food.

Be cautious of specialty salts, sea salt has the same sodium content as table salt.

Limit your use of condiments such as high sodium food additives including brine, and other items that include sodium, such as monosodium glutamate.

FOOD GROUP	HIGH-SODIUM FOODS	LOW-SODIUM ALTERNATIVES
MEATS, POULTRY, FISH, LEGUMES, EGGS + NUTS	<p>Smoked, cured, salted or canned meat, fish or poultry including bacon, cold cuts, ham, frankfurters, sausage, sardines, caviar and anchovies</p> <p>Frozen breaded meats and dinners, such as burritos and pizza</p> <p>Canned entrees, such as ravioli, spam and chili</p> <p>Salted nuts</p> <p>Beans canned with salt added</p>	<p>Any fresh or frozen beef, lamb, pork, poultry and fish</p> <p>Eggs and egg substitutes</p> <p>Low sodium peanut butter, unsalted nuts</p> <p>Dry peas and beans (not canned)</p> <p>Low sodium canned fish</p> <p>Drained, water or oil packed canned fish or poultry</p>
DAIRY PRODUCTS	<p>Buttermilk</p> <p>Regular and processed cheese, cheese spreads and sauces</p> <p>Cottage cheese</p>	<p>Milk, yogurt and ice cream</p> <p>Low sodium cheeses, cream cheese, ricotta cheese and mozzarella</p>
BREADS, GRAINS + CEREALS	<p>Bread and rolls with salted tops</p> <p>Quick breads, self-rising flour, biscuit, pancake and waffle mixes</p> <p>Pizza, croutons and salted crackers</p> <p>Prepackaged, processed mixes for potatoes, rice, pasta and stuffing</p>	<p>Plain breads, bagels and rolls</p> <p>Muffins and most ready-to-eat cereals</p> <p>All rice and pasta, but do not add salt when cooking</p> <p>Low sodium corn and flour tortillas</p> <p>Low sodium crackers and breadsticks</p> <p>Unsalted popcorn, chips and pretzels</p>
VEGETABLES + FRUITS	<p>Regular canned vegetables and vegetable juices</p> <p>Olives, pickles, sauerkraut and other pickled vegetables</p> <p>Vegetables made with ham, bacon or salted pork</p> <p>Packaged mixes, such as scalloped or au gratin potatoes, frozen hash browns and Tater Tots</p> <p>Commercially prepared pasta and tomato sauces and salsa</p>	<p>Fresh and frozen vegetables without sauces</p> <p>Low sodium or no salt added canned vegetables</p> <p>Fresh potatoes</p> <p>Low salt tomato or V-8 juice.</p> <p>Most fresh, frozen and canned fruit</p> <p>Dried fruits</p> <p>No salt added or low sodium marinara</p>
SOUPS	<p>Regular canned and dehydrated soup, broth and bouillon</p> <p>Cup of noodles and seasoned ramen mixes</p>	<p>Low sodium canned and dehydrated soups, broth and bouillon</p> <p>Homemade soups without added salt</p>
FATS, DESSERTS, SWEETS + CONDIMENTS	<p>Soy sauce, seasoning salt, other sauces and marinades</p> <p>Bottled salad dressings, regular salad dressing with bacon bits</p> <p>Salted butter or margarine</p> <p>Instant pudding and cake</p> <p>Large portions of ketchup, mustard</p>	<p>Mayonnaise, vinegar, unsalted butter or margarine</p> <p>Olive oil, avocado oil, vinegar and low sodium sauces and salad dressings</p> <p>All desserts made without salt</p>