

Living with Low Sodium

WHAT IS SODIUM?

Sodium is a mineral found naturally in many foods. Your body requires about 500 milligrams of sodium each day to function normally. Just 1/4 teaspoon of table salt contains 500 milligrams of sodium. A diet of fresh, unprocessed foods without adding any salt at all would add up to 1,000-1,200 milligrams of sodium in a day. We get all the sodium we need naturally from foods without adding salt to foods. The greatest sources of sodium in your diet are table salt, processed foods (canned, boxed, frozen), fast foods and deli foods. Sodium is also found in baking ingredients, medications and beverages.

WHY LIMIT SODIUM?

A diet high in sodium can cause thirst, shortness of breath and water retention (edema). This may, in turn, lead to high blood pressure, which can increase your risk of a stroke or heart attack and contribute to symptoms of congestive heart failure. Sodium restriction, along with weight reduction can lower blood pressure in most people. People with high blood pressure or congestive heart failure should limit sodium to **less than 2,000 milligrams each day**.

EASY STEPS TO LOWER THE SODIUM IN YOUR DIET

- Replace the saltshaker with a shaker of dried herbs and spices which can kick up the flavor without adding sodium. Check out the recipes in this section for some ideas.
 - Try salt-free marinades, sauces, fresh or dried herbs and spices to flavor your foods when cooking. There are many salt-free seasoning products available at grocery stores to help you kick the salt habit!
 - Limit your intake of high-sodium fast foods, pizza, frozen meals, canned soups and broths, canned vegetables with added salt, salty snacks (like chips), lunchmeats, and processed cheeses (like cottage, American, Velveeta, Cheese Whiz, and cheese spreads/dips).
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READING FOOD LABELS

- Watch for these ingredients on labels: Sodium (Na), salt (NaCl), brine (salt and water), sea salt, monosodium glutamate (MSG), sodium nitrate, sodium bicarbonate (baking soda), baking powder, sodium propionate, sodium benzoate, sodium caseinate, sodium phosphate, disodium inosinate, and meat stock.
- Look for:

Reduced Sodium	25% less sodium than the original product
Low Sodium	< 140 mg per serving
Sodium Free	No sodium
- Try to choose foods and beverages with **less than 300mg** of sodium per serving. The serving size is determined by the manufacturer and can be found at the top of the Nutrition Facts Label.