

# Living with Low Sodium

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## 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.

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## 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**.

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## 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:

|                       |   |
|-----------------------|---|
| <b>Reduced Sodium</b> | 25% less sodium than the original product |
| <b>Low Sodium</b>     | < 140 mg per serving                      |
| <b>Sodium Free</b>    | 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.

# 2000mg Sodium Diet

| Food Item   | Choose More Often  | Choose Less Often   |
|---|--|---|
| <b>Bread/Cereal/<br/>Grains/Pasta<br/>(6 oz per day)</b>  | 100% whole grain versions of: breads, English muffins, bagels, dinner rolls, tortillas, pita bread, pasta, frozen waffles, low-sodium crackers, rice, oatmeal, any whole grain low-sugar cereal that provides 5gm fiber per serving, brown or wild rice, low-sodium or homemade bread crumbs | Breads, rolls, and crackers with salted tops, instant hot cereals, pancake mix, stuffing mix, biscuit mix, regular bread crumbs or cracker crumbs, potato, rice or pasta box mixes  |
| <b>Fruits<br/>(2 cups per day)</b>  | All fruits: fresh, canned, frozen, dried or juice  | Fruits processed with salt or sodium  |
| <b>Vegetables<br/>(3 cups per day)</b>  | Fresh or frozen vegetables, low-sodium canned vegetables, low-sodium tomato juice/V-8  | Regular canned vegetables, tomato juice/V-8, pickles, olives, any pickled vegetable, sauerkraut   |
| <b>Dairy Products<br/>(3 cups per day)</b>  | Skim, 1%, 2% milk, low-sodium cheeses, low-sodium ricotta and cottage cheese, low-fat yogurt, Swiss cheese   | Buttermilk (1cup/wk), chocolate milk, milkshake, regular cheeses, regular cottage cheese, processed American cheese, Cheese Whiz, cheese sauce, Velveeta  |
| <b>Meats/Meat<br/>Alternatives, Fish,<br/>Poultry, Dried<br/>Beans, Eggs<br/>(up to 6 oz per day)</b> | Any lean fresh or frozen beef, lamb, pork, chicken, turkey, fish and shrimp, low-sodium canned tuna, canned salmon (rinsed), eggs and egg substitutes, unsalted nuts and seeds, low-sodium peanut butter, beans and legumes, low-sodium soy products   | Any smoked, cured, salted, koshered or canned meat, fish or poultry including: bacon, ham, sausage, lunch meats, hot dogs, chipped beef, sardines, anchovies, pickled meats or fish, pickled eggs, salted nuts or seeds   |
| <b>Snacks</b>   | Popcorn with out butter or salt, low-fat, low-sodium microwave popcorn, unsalted tortilla chips, animal crackers, fig newtons  | Regular potato chips, tortilla chips, baked potato chips, popcorn, pretzels, cheese puffs, cheese crackers  |
| <b>Condiments</b>   | Salt free spices, fresh herbs, pepper, low-fat salad dressings, vinegar, flavored vinegars, lemon or lime juice, hot pepper sauce, low-sodium soy sauce, low-sodium ketchup, mustard   | Table salt, any seasoning made with salt including garlic salt, celery salt, onion salt, seasoned salt, sea salt, rock salt and kosher salt, Worcestershire sauce, regular soy sauce, meat tenderizers, teriyaki sauce, steak sauce, barbecue sauce, bouillon, MSG, bacon bits, salad dressings, bottled marinades, seasoned rice vinegar |
| <b>Prepared Foods</b>   | Frozen dinners (<500 mg sodium per serving), low-sodium canned soups, homemade soup without added salt   | Frozen dinners, regular canned soups, fast food, pizza, packaged foods, Ramen noodles, instant soup mixes, sauce or gravy mixes   |

# Salt Free Seasonings

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For all seasoning recipes, mix all ingredients and store in an airtight container in a cool dark place or the refrigerator unless recipe specifies otherwise.

## HERB SEASONING

1/2 tsp. cayenne pepper  
1 Tbsp. garlic powder  
1 tsp. basil  
1 tsp. marjoram  
1 tsp. thyme  
1 tsp. dried parsley  
1 tsp. savory  
1 tsp. mace  
1 tsp. onion powder  
1 tsp. pepper  
1 tsp. sage

Use in a shaker at the table in place of salt. Good on casseroles, stews, vegetables and meats. Makes about 1/3 cup.

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## PEPPED UP PARSLEY PEPPER

2 Tbsp. lemon pepper seasoning  
1 Tbsp. onion powder  
1 Tbsp. dried parsley flakes  
1-2 tsp. garlic powder

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## CHILI POWDER

3 tbsp. paprika  
2 tsp. oregano  
1 tsp. cumin  
1 tsp. tumeric  
1 tsp. garlic powder  
1/4 tsp. cayenne pepper

Use in place of packaged chili powder mixes.

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## ITALIANO BLEND

1 Tbsp. oregano  
1 Tbsp. basil  
1½ tsp. onion powder  
1½ tsp. thyme  
1 tsp. garlic powder  
1 tsp. black pepper

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## LEMON SEASONING

Grated peel of half a lemon  
2 tsp. dry parsley flakes  
1/2 tsp. garlic powder  
1/2 tsp. oregano or basil  
1/2 tsp. marjoram  
1/4 tsp. allspice  
1/4 tsp. black pepper

Store in refrigerator in an airtight container. Use on meat, poultry, or fish before broiling or baking.

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## ALL PURPOSE SPICE BLEND

5 tsp. onion powder  
1 Tbsp. garlic powder  
1 Tbsp. paprika  
1 Tbsp. dry mustard  
1 tsp. thyme  
1/2 tsp. pepper  
1/2 tsp. celery seed

# Tips for Making Low-Sodium Choices When Dining Out

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- Expect restaurant foods to be higher in sodium than what you prepare at home. Even the spreads and butter that comes with your bread basket has added salt.
- Most chain restaurants will have nutrition information available about their menu items so you can select foods that are lower in sodium. Ask for a nutrition fact brochure while at the restaurant or visit the restaurant's web page on-line to look up the information at home before you go to the restaurant.
- Budget your sodium intake when you know you will be dining out. Make lower sodium food choices for your other meals of the day, anticipating a higher sodium intake when dining out.
- When ordering your menu item, request that your foods be prepared without any added salt, marinades, butters or seasonings that contain salt. For example ask for your grilled meats, fish and poultry without added salt. If the food has been pre-marinated, breaded or brined, the salt cannot be removed.
- Try to limit menu items such as soups, mashed potatoes, rice pilaf, casseroles, lasagna, or entrees with sauces, gravies, breading or processed cheese. These foods are already prepared which means you have less control of the sodium content.
- Ask for sauces, gravies or dressing on the side, so you control how much of these foods are added to your menu item.
- Do not add salt or other high sodium condiments such as soy sauce to your foods at the table.
- Limit intake of smoked or cured foods like smoked salmon or ham, salami, pastrami, turkey breast, and other lunchmeats.
- Select fresh foods such as salads, fresh vegetable plates or fresh fruit cups more often.
- Eat half or a third of the entrée and take the other portion home for another meal. Smaller portions also mean a lower sodium intake.

# High Potassium Foods

Potassium is a mineral your body needs to survive. What is potassium's role in the body?

- Regulates the balance of fluid in the body
- Transmits nerve signals
- Helps muscles contract
- Keeps the heart beating
- Regulates blood pressure along with calcium and magnesium

Adults need *at least* 2,000mg potassium every day. The Institute of Medicine recommends 4,700mg potassium per day. Potassium is widely available in our food supply. Focus on fruits, vegetables, whole grains and lean meats for the best sources of potassium.

| <b>Food</b>                       | <b>Serving Size</b> | <b>Potassium (mg)</b> |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|
| Baked potato with skin            | 1 medium            | 1,000                 |
| Sweet potato, baked               | 1 medium            | 1,000                 |
| Salmon                            | 6 oz                | 750                   |
| Low-sodium tomato sauce           | 1 cup               | 750                   |
| Dates                             | 10                  | 541                   |
| Plain yogurt, low fat             | 1 cup               | 530                   |
| Low-sodium tomato juice           | 1 cup               | 521                   |
| Edamame (soy beans)               | 1/2 cup             | 500                   |
| Avocado                           | 1/2 cup             | 500                   |
| Cantaloupe, cubed                 | 1 cup               | 500                   |
| Halibut, baked                    | 3 oz                | 490                   |
| Apricots, dried                   | 10 halves           | 482                   |
| Swiss chard, cooked               | 1/2 cup             | 480                   |
| Orange juice                      | 1 cup               | 474                   |
| Banana                            | 1 medium            | 451                   |
| Winter squash, baked              | 1/2 cup mashed      | 448                   |
| Cod, baked                        | 3 oz                | 440                   |
| Lean pork loin, broiled           | 3.5 oz              | 430                   |
| Milk, skim                        | 1 cup               | 406                   |
| Dried beans, cooked (pinto, lima) | 1/2 cup             | 400                   |
| Beets, cooked                     | 1/2 cup             | 386                   |
| Lentils, cooked                   | 1/2 cup             | 365                   |
| Low fat yogurt, fruit flavored    | 1 cup               | 358                   |
| Kidney beans, cooked              | 1/2 cup             | 356                   |
| Carrot, raw                       | 1/2 cup             | 342                   |
| Grapefruit, red, pink or white    | 1 half              | 321                   |
| Spinach, raw, chopped             | 1 cup               | 312                   |
| Raisin Bran cereal                | 1 cup               | 300                   |
| Prunes                            | 1/4 cup             | 300                   |
| Pumpkin pie                       | 1 slice             | 289                   |
| Broccoli, cooked                  | 1/2 cup             | 250                   |
| Raisins                           | 1/4 cup             | 250                   |
| Peanut butter                     | 2 Tbsp.             | 250                   |

# Cooking with Fresh Herbs

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**Beans (dried)** – basil, cumin, cayenne, chili, mint, parsley, pepper, sage, savory, rosemary, thyme

**Beef** – basil, bay, chili, cilantro, curry, cumin, garlic, marjoram, mustard, oregano, parsley, pepper, rosemary, sage, savory, tarragon, thyme

**Breads** – anise, basil, caraway, cardamom, cinnamon, coriander, cumin, dill, garlic, lemon peel, orange peel, oregano, poppy seeds, rosemary, saffron, sage, thyme

**Chicken** – allspice, basil, bay, cinnamon, curry, dill, fennel, garlic, ginger, lemongrass, mustard, paprika, rosemary, saffron, sage, savory, thyme

**Corn** – chili, curry, dill, marjoram, parsley, savory, thyme

**Eggs** – basil, chervil, chili, chives, curry, dill, fennel, ginger, lemon peel, marjoram, oregano, paprika, parsley, pepper, sage, tarragon, thyme

**Fish** – anise, basil, bay, cayenne, celery seed, chives, curry, dill, fennel, garlic, ginger, lemon peel, mustard, oregano, parsley, rosemary, thyme, saffron, sage, savory, tarragon, marjoram

**Fruits** – allspice, anise, cardamom, cinnamon, cloves, coriander, ginger, mint

**Lamb** – basil, bay, cinnamon, coriander, cumin, dill, garlic, marjoram, mint, mustard, oregano, parsley, rosemary, savory, tarragon, thyme

**Potatoes** – basil, caraway, celery seed, chervil, chives, coriander, dill, marjoram, oregano, paprika, parsley, poppy seed, rosemary, tarragon, thyme

**Salad Dressings** – basil, celery seed, chives, dill, fennel, garlic, horseradish, marjoram, mustard, oregano, paprika, parsley, pepper, rosemary, saffron, tarragon, thyme

**Salads** – basil, caraway, chives, dill, garlic, lemon peel, lovage, marjoram, mint, oregano, parsley, rosemary, tarragon, thyme

**Soups** – basil, bay, chervil, chili, chives, cumin, dill, fennel, garlic, marjoram, parsley, pepper, rosemary, sage, savory, thyme

**Sweets** – allspice, angelica, anise, cardamom, cinnamon, cloves, fennel, ginger, lemon peel, mace, nutmeg, mint, orange peel, rosemary

**Tomatoes** – basil, bay, celery seed, cinnamon, chili, curry, dill, fennel, garlic, ginger, marjoram, oregano, parsley, rosemary, savory, tarragon, thyme