
A HEALTHY DIET

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

- Do not salt your food at the table. Take the saltshaker off the table. Do not add salt while cooking.
- Try salt free seasonings and spices to flavor your foods instead of salt. Experiment with spices, there are many flavors to choose from!
- Limit intake of fast foods, pizza, frozen meals, canned soups, canned vegetables, salty snacks, lunchmeats, and processed cheese (cottage, American, Velveeta, Cheese Whiz).

Continued on the following page

A HEALTHY DIET CONTINUED

READING FOOD LABELS

- Watch for these ingredients on labels: Sodium (Na), salt (NaCl), brine (salt and water), 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 with **less than 300mg** sodium per serving.