



A nutrition Fact Sheet



Sodium

Most Americans have too much sodium in their diet. Too much sodium causes the body to hold onto water, which puts extra stress on the heart and blood vessels and can lead to high blood pressure.

What is the recommended amount of sodium per day?

The USDA recommends:

- No more than 2300 milligrams of sodium each day.
- No more than 1500 milligrams for those over 50 years old, African Americans, and people with high blood pressure, diabetes, or kidney disease.

The American Heart Association recommends that all Americans limit their intake to 1500 milligrams per day because:

- Nearly 70 percent of the US population falls into the categories of people who should limit their intake to 1500 milligrams.
- 90 percent of Americans are expected to develop high blood pressure.

The average sodium intake is 3400 milligrams each day. One teaspoon of salt has more than the recommended daily amount of sodium.

Where does the sodium we eat come from?

- 5% is added while cooking
- 6% is added while eating
- 12% is naturally occurring
- 77% is from processed and restaurant foods

Even if you don't salt your food during cooking or before eating, you could easily be getting too much sodium in your diet!

What is the difference between salt and sodium?

What can we do to cut back on sodium in our diet?

At the store:

- Read labels carefully. Choose products with the lowest amount of sodium per serving.
- Look for lower salt versions of condiments like soy sauce, salad dressings, mustard, ketchup, and relish.
- Choose canned vegetables with 'no salt added' whenever possible.
- Limit purchases of salted snacks, frozen dinners, processed meat, and mixes or instant products like flavored rice or pasta.
- Choose low sodium soups.

When preparing food:

- Salt in main dishes, soups, salads and other recipes can be reduced by half or removed. Gradually reduce the salt each time the recipe is prepared.
- Use onions, garlic, herbs, spices, and vinegars in place of some or all of the salt.
- Drain and rinse canned beans, vegetables, tuna, and salmon. This can cut the sodium by 40 percent or more.
- Cook pasta without salt.
- Remove the salt shaker from the table.

What about salt substitutes?

Do not use salt substitutes, especially those containing potassium, without talking to a healthcare professional first.

Sodium is a component of salt. Table salt is 40% sodium and 60% chloride.

How much lower in sodium are ‘low sodium’ versions of foods?

Lower and higher sodium versions of the same foods can sometimes be very different in the amount of sodium they contain. The table below shows some examples.

Amount	Regular Food Item	Sodium (mg)	Low Sodium Food Item	Sodium (mg)
1 cube	Bouillon	960	Bouillon, unsalted	3
1 large	Pickle	1425	Cucumber	1
1 cup	Tomato juice	878	Tomato juice, unsalted	14
1 cup	Tomato soup	932	Tomato soup, low sodium	34
3 ounces	Turkey ham	865	Turkey	75
¼ cup	Peanuts, salted	246	Peanuts, unsalted	2
2 Tablespoons	Peanut butter	150-250	Peanut butter, unsalted	0

How much sodium is in homemade foods?

Use the table below to figure out how much sodium will be in each serving when cooking or baking. For example, a recipe that serves 4 and calls for 1 teaspoon of salt will contain 580 milligrams of sodium per serving from the salt. (This number is in bold in the table.) Keep in mind that this table only shows you the sodium from table salt in the recipe. Other ingredients, like broth or soy sauce, may also contain sodium.

Milligrams of Sodium (Amount per Serving)					
Number of Servings in a Recipe					
Amount of Salt	1	2	4	6	8
¼ teaspoon	580	290	145	97	81
½ teaspoon	1160	580	290	194	145
1 teaspoon	2325	1160	580	388	290
1½ teaspoons	3490	1745	870	580	436
2 teaspoons	4650	2325	1160	775	580



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