

Health Facts *for you*

Guidelines for a Low Sodium Diet

Many of us eat about 3500 milligrams (mg) of sodium every day. Almost one-fourth of that comes naturally in our food. The rest is added at the table with the saltshaker or is added when foods are made or processed. Salt is sodium chloride.

All of us should be aware of the amount of salt in our diet. It is very important for those of us that have heart disease, kidney disease, high blood pressure, liver failure, or long-term steroid use. Your doctor will tell you how much salt you can have in a day.

How will a low sodium diet help me?

- Help lower your blood pressure.
- Help prevent your body from keeping extra water and fluids.
- Help the meds you take work better.
- Decrease your risk for kidney stones and bone loss.

How can I lower the salt in my diet without losing flavor?

Tips to cut major sources of salt from your diet.

- Use fresh foods.
- Use frozen foods that are plain and nothing added.
- Use canned goods that are “with no added salt”.
- Use fresh chicken, fish, and lean meat. Avoid canned or processed meats.
- Use herbs spices, and salt-free seasoning blends when cooking and at the table.
- Cook rice, pasta, and hot cereal without salt.
- Cut back on instant or flavored rice, pasta, and cereal mixes.
- Choose “convenience” foods that are low in sodium.
- Cut back on frozen dinners, pizza, packaged mixes, canned soups or broths, and salad dressings.
- Rinse canned foods, such as tuna, to remove some sodium.
- Look for low-sodium, reduced-sodium, or no-salt-added foods.
- Choose ready-to-eat breakfast cereals that are low in sodium.
- Avoid commercially processed, high sodium foods (see following list).

What foods should I avoid?

All Salted, Cured, or Smoked Meat or Fish should be avoided

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|---------------------|-----------------------|---------------|---------------------|
| ▪ Bacon | ▪ Canned chicken | ▪ Ham | ▪ Sardines |
| ▪ Bologna | ▪ Canned tuna | ▪ Herring | ▪ Smoked fish |
| ▪ Beef Jerky | ▪ Corned beef | ▪ Hot Dogs | ▪ SPAM [®] |
| ▪ Bratwurst | ▪ Frankfurters | ▪ Lunch meats | |
| ▪ Breakfast sausage | ▪ Frozen breaded meat | ▪ Pepperoni | |
| ▪ Canadian Bacon | | ▪ Salami | |

Dairy products to Avoid

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| ▪ Buttermilk | ▪ Cottage cheese | ▪ Party dips |
| ▪ Camembert cheese | ▪ Gorgonzola cheese | ▪ Processed cheese (American, Velveeta [®]) |
| ▪ Cheese spreads | ▪ Instant puddings | ▪ Roquefort cheese |

Grains and Starches to Avoid

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| ▪ Bread with a salted top | ▪ Crackers with a salted top | ▪ Croutons |
| ▪ Canned backed beans | ▪ Croutons | |
| | ▪ Instant hot cereals | |

Vegetables to Avoid

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| ▪ Canned vegetable | ▪ Sauerkraut | ▪ Tomato sauce or paste |
| ▪ Pickles (sweet and dill) | ▪ Spaghetti sauce | Tomato and vegetable juices |
| ▪ Pizza sauce | ▪ Stewed tomatoes | |

Tip: the above are allowed when it is “salt-free”

Convenience and Processed Foods to Avoid

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|-----------------------------|---|--|
| ▪ Biscuit mixes | ▪ Packaged dinners and entrees | ▪ Olives |
| ▪ Bouillon cubes | ▪ Packaged potato, rice, and noodle mixes | ▪ Regular broth |
| ▪ Deli meats | ▪ Pancakes mixes | ▪ Relish |
| ▪ Gravy mixes | ▪ Potato chips | ▪ Salted nuts |
| ▪ Frozen dinners | ▪ Pretzels | ▪ Sauce mixes |
| ▪ Macaroni & cheese (boxed) | | ▪ Soups: canned, frozen, or dehydrated |
| ▪ Oriental dinners | | ▪ Stuffing mixes |

Condiments and Seasoning to Avoid

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|------------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| ▪ Barbeques sauce | ▪ Onion salt | ▪ Stir fry mixes and sauces |
| ▪ Celery salt | ▪ Regular ketchup | ▪ Tarter sauce |
| ▪ Chili sauce | ▪ Salad dressings | ▪ Taco sauce |
| ▪ Garlic salt | ▪ Seasoned salt | ▪ Taco seasoning |
| ▪ Horseradish sauce | ▪ Soy sauce (regular and lite) | ▪ Teriyaki sauce |
| ▪ Lite salt | ▪ Steak sauce | ▪ Worcestershire [®] sauce |
| ▪ Meat tenderizer | | |
| ▪ Monosodium glutamate (MSG) | | |

What do I need to know about “salt substitutes”?

Anyone with **liver disease** should **NOT** use salt substitutes.

Table salt is sodium chloride. Many times salt substitutes are potassium chloride.

Anyone with kidney disease or anyone watching their potassium intake must choose salt substitutes that are low in potassium. The products listed below with an asterisk (*) contain high amounts of potassium and should not be used without your doctor’s okay.

Salt Substitutes			
Product	Serving Size	Sodium (Milligrams or mg)	Potassium (Milligrams or mg)
Salt	1 teaspoon	2300 milligrams	0
Mrs. Dash [®]	1 teaspoon	0	40 milligrams
Spike [®] (Salt-Free)	1 teaspoon	0	96
Veg-It [®]	1 teaspoon	Less than 65 milligrams	Less than 65 milligrams
Adolph’s Sodium Free Tenderizer [®]	¼ teaspoon	0	420 milligrams
Accent Low Sodium Seasoning [®]	1 teaspoon	600 milligrams	0
Salt Sense [®]	1 teaspoon	1560 milligrams	0
Pleasoning Mini-mini Salt	1 teaspoon	440 milligrams	0
*Morton Lite Salt [®]	1 teaspoon	1100 milligrams	1500 milligrams
*Estee Salt-It [®]	1 teaspoon	0	3520 milligrams
*Morton Nature’s Seasons [®]	1 teaspoon	1300 milligrams	2800 milligrams
*Morton Salt Substitute [®]	1 teaspoon	0	2730 milligrams
*No Salt [®]	1 teaspoon	5 milligrams	2500 milligrams
*Nu-Salt [®]	1 teaspoon	0	529 milligrams

How do I find out how much sodium or potassium a product has?

Learning to read food labels and the nutrition facts is key.

Begin by looking at the serving size and sodium content. The sodium content is given in milligrams or mg.

This sample food label reports that:

1 serving = 1 pretzel

1 pretzel has 470 mg of sodium.

Nutrition Facts	
Serving Size 1 pretzel (about 25 g)	
Servings Per Container 20	
Amount Per Serving	
% Daily Value	
Calories 90	Calories from Fat 0
Total Fat 0g	0%
Saturated Fat 0g	0%
Sodium 470 mg	20%
Total Carbohydrate 19g	6%
Dietary Fiber less than 1g	4%
Sugars less than 1g	
Protein 1g	
Vitamin A *	Vitamin C *
Calcium *	Iron *
*Contains less than 2% of the Daily Value of these nutrients.	
*Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet. Your daily values may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs:	
Calories: 2,000 2,500	
Total Fat	Less than 65g 80g
Sat Fat	Less than 20g 25g
Cholesterol	Less than 300mg 300mg
Sodium	Less than 2,400mg 2,400mg
Total Carbohydrate	300g 375g
Dietary Fiber	25g 30g

Next, look at the ingredient list of a product for the words **SALT** or **SODIUM**.

Other products to be aware of that contain sodium include:

- Salt (sodium chloride)
- Monosodium glutamate (MSG)
- Baking soda (sodium bicarbonate)
- Baking powder
- Sodium propionate

Use the table below to know about of how much sodium will be in each serving when cooking or baking.

Milligrams of Sodium Amount per Serving	Number of Servings in a Recipe				
	1	2	4	6	8
1/4 teaspoon	575	288	144	96	72
1/2 teaspoon	1150	575	255	192	144
1 teaspoon	2300	1150	575 ▲	383	288
1/2 teaspoons	3450	1725	863	575	431
2 teaspoons	4600	2300	1150	767	575

For example:
A recipe that serves 4 and calls for 1 teaspoon of salt will contain 575 mg of sodium per serving.

What do I need to be looking for on food labels and what does it mean?

Label Claim	Amount of Sodium per serving
Sodium free	5 mg or less
Low sodium	35 mg or less
Moderately low sodium	140 mg or less
Reduced sodium	Much less than the regular item but more than 140 mg per serving.

Caution: Food products that are ‘reduced fat’, ‘fat-free’, or labeled as ‘good for your heart’ are often higher in sodium and calories.

Regular versus Low Sodium

The table below compares regular and low sodium food items.

Serving size	Regular Food Item	Sodium (mg)	Low sodium	Sodium (mg)
1 cube	Bouillon	960	Bouillon, unsalted	3
½ cup	Corn, canned and salted	192	Corn	1
3 ounces	Corned beef	800	Roast beef	60
1 teaspoon	Garlic salt	1480	Garlic powder	1
3 ounces	Ham	1025	Fresh pork	60
¾ cup	Instant oatmeal	180	Regular cooked oatmeal	5
¼ cup	Pasta sauce, canned	125-275	No salt added pasta sauce	25
¼ cup	Peanuts, salted	246	Peanuts, unsalted	2
2 tablespoons	Peanut butter	150-250	Unsalted peanut butter	0
1 large	Pickle	1425	Cucumber	1
1 teaspoon	Salt	2300	Salt (Lite)	968
1 cracker	Saltine crackers	70	Low-sodium saltine crackers	7
1 tablespoon	Soy sauce	1029	Soy sauce, reduced sodium	840
1 cup	Tomato juice	878	Tomato juice, unsalted	14
1 cup	Tomato soup	932	Tomato soup, low sodium	34
½ cup	Tuna	384	Tuna, 50% less salt	192
3 ounces	Turkey ham	865	Turkey	75

Do my medicines contain sodium?

Some drugs do contain a large amount of sodium. Read the labels on all over-the-counter (OTC) drugs. Look for the ingredient list and warning statement to see if sodium is in the product. If a statement of sodium content does not appear, ask your doctor or pharmacist about the sodium content of the drug.

How can I season my food with less salt?

Experiment with a variety of herbs and spices. Here are some that you may enjoy.

- **Beef:** dry mustard, marjoram, nutmeg, onion, sage, thyme, pepper, bay leaf
- **Pork:** Onion, garlic, sage: serve with applesauce or spiced apples
- **Lamb:** mint, garlic, rosemary, curry, spiced apricots
- **Poultry:** paprika, mushrooms, thyme, sage, parsley
- **Fish:** dry mustard, paprika, curry, bay leaf, lemon juice, mushrooms
- **Eggs:** pepper, green pepper, mushrooms, dry mustard, paprika, curry
- **Asparagus:** lemon juice
- **Green beans:** marjoram, lemon juice, nutmeg, low calorie French dressing, dill seed
- **Broccoli:** lemon juice
- **Cabbage:** mustard dressing, dill seed
- **Cauliflower:** nutmeg
- **Corn:** green pepper
- **Peas:** mint, mushrooms, parsley, onion
- **Potatoes:** parsley, mace, chopped green pepper, onion
- **Squash:** ginger, mace
- **Sweet potatoes:** orange juice, cinnamon or nutmeg; escalloped with apples
- **Tomatoes:** basil, oregano

What should I know about Fast Food?

Many fast foods contain high amounts of sodium.

Restaurant	Food Item	Sodium (mg)
Burger King	Whopper with cheese	1450
Culver's	Classic Caesar with grilled chicken (no dressing)	1419
Culver's	Butter burger bacon deluxe (single)	1067
Pizza Hut	Supreme pan pizza, 2 slices (large)	2040
Subway	Sandwich, ham, foot long	2510
Taco Bell	Bean burrito with red sauce	1190
Wendy's	Hamburger, single, plain	490
Wendy's	Hamburger, single, the works	870
McDonald's	Hotcakes with margarine & syrup	590

Other Nutrition Care for You handouts that talk about sodium.

- #379 Heart Health: The DASH Diet
- #328 Fast Food Restaurant Nutrient Guide

Here is a list of websites that offer more about sodium.

- Calorie King for Food Awareness: www.calorieking.com
- Your Guide to Lowering High Blood Pressure: www.nhlbi.nih.gov/hbp/index.html
- The DASH Eating Plan: www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/public/heart/hbp/dash/index.htm
- American Heart Association-Delicious Decisions: www.deliciousdecisions.org/
- Heart Failure Society of America-How to Follow a Low Sodium Diet:
www.hfsa.org/pdf/module2.pdf
- Salt Talk: my.execpc.com/~veggie/salt.html

If you would like to make an appointment or are a UW Health patient with more questions please contact UW Health at one of the phone numbers listed below

Nutrition Clinic
University Station
2880 University Ave
Madison, WI 53705
(608) 263-5012

Nutrition Clinic
UW Health West Clinic
451 Junction Road
Madison, WI 53717
(608) 265-7526

Nutrition Clinic
UW Health East Clinic
5249 East Terrace Dr
Madison, WI 53718
(608) 265-0963

UW Health
Kidney Clinic
3034 Fish
Hatchery Rd
Fitchburg, WI 53713
(608) 270-5656