

What is sodium?

Sodium is a mineral found in food and all types of salt. We need a very small amount of sodium for body water balance. However, most people eat more sodium than they need.

How much sodium should I eat each day?

You should limit sodium to 2300 mg or less each day. Aim for less than 600 mg for a meal and less than 250 mg for a snack.

Why do I need to limit sodium?

With kidney disease your kidneys do not balance sodium and water well. If you eat too much sodium you may have:

- High blood pressure
- Thirst
- Puffy hands, face and feet
- Too much fluid around your heart and lungs, making it hard to breathe
- Cramps during hemodialysis

By eating less sodium, you can help control these problems.

Some medications used to protect the kidneys and lower blood pressure work better when your diet is lower in sodium.



Did You Know?

1 teaspoon (5 mL) of table salt has 2325 mg of sodium.

Where does sodium come from?

- **Processed foods:** salt and other sodium additives are found in most packaged and prepared foods at the grocery store. Most of the sodium we eat comes from processed foods.
- **The salt shaker:** added in cooking and at the table.
- **Natural content:** small amounts of sodium is found naturally in most foods.

How can I eat less sodium?

- Do not add salt to your food.
- Do not add salt during cooking.
- Use fresh or frozen (without salt) meat, chicken, fish, seafood, eggs, vegetables and fruits. These are naturally low in sodium.
- Make your meals with fresh ingredients.
- Avoid high sodium foods such as:
 - Ham, bacon, salami and other deli meats
 - Pickles, olives, relish
 - Teriyaki, fish or soy sauces

- Canned or packaged soups
- Seasoned packaged or instant rice/noodles
- Bouillon cubes (OXO®, Bovril®), Marmite®, Veg-mite®
- Salted snack foods (chips, pretzels, nuts, crackers)
- Read food labels. Limit foods with sodium or salt listed as one of the first few ingredients.
- Cook with herbs and spices instead of salt.
- Cook at home more often. Restaurant meals are higher in sodium than home cooked meals.

Can I use salt substitutes?

No; do not use salt substitutes. Salt substitutes such as Co-salt™, Nu-salt™, No-salt™ or Half-Salt™ are very high in potassium and can be dangerous for people with kidney disease.

Should I use low-sodium or reduced-sodium products?

Be aware that many foods that are labeled “low sodium” or “reduced sodium” may contain a salt substitute such as potassium chloride. This can be dangerous for people with kidney disease. Make sure you check the ingredient list.

How can I eat less sodium when eating out?

- Ask if the restaurant prepares their foods in advance or after you order. Do they take special requests? Ask if they can cook your food with less, or no salt.
- Ask for gravy, sauce and salad dressing on the side. Use only a small amount.

What to Order

- **Sandwiches:** Choose vegetables, roasted meat or poultry, egg, hard cheese, or fish. Avoid ham, processed meats, processed cheese and pickles.
- **Pasta:** Many pasta sauces are high in salt. Do not choose dishes with salty items such as ham, Parmesan or Romano cheese or olives. Ask to have the Parmesan on the side and add it sparingly.
- **Pizza:** Most pizzas are high in salt. Better choices are vegetarian pizzas made with real mozzarella cheese and fresh vegetables.
- **Hamburgers:** Choose tomato, onion, lettuce and hard cheese. Avoid processed cheese slices. Use only small amounts of ketchup, mustard and relish.
- **Fish and chips:** Ask for unsalted fries. Try lemon or vinegar instead of salt and ketchup.
- **Curries:** Ask for foods made without salt. Avoid salty chutneys or relishes.
- **Asian Foods:** Some Chinese, Filipino, Japanese and Korean foods are high in sodium. Choose plain rice and dishes that include vegetables with meat, fish, tofu or chicken without breading or batter on them. Avoid soups and limit added sauces like soy or teriyaki.

Did You Know?



1 tablespoon (15 mL) of soy sauce has 1029 mg of sodium or more!

High Sodium Vs. Lower Sodium Food Choices

Eat Less (high in sodium)

Better Choice (low in sodium)

Snack Foods

Salted:

- Crackers
- Rice Cakes
- Corn/Tortilla chips
- Potato chips
- Popcorn
- Pretzels
- Nuts and seeds

Unsalted:

- Crackers
- Rice cakes
- Corn/Tortilla chips
- Popcorn
- Pretzels
- Nuts and seeds



Meat and Other Protein Foods

- Ham, bacon, salted pork
- Hot dogs, sausage, salami
- Pastrami, corned beef, cold cuts, deli meats, bologna
- Spam™, Klik™
- Lox, pickled herring, anchovies
- Vegetarian products: processed hot dogs, patties, nuggets, etc.

- Fresh beef
- Pork
- Chicken, Turkey
- Fish, Seafood, "No salt added" canned fish
- Eggs
- Natural peanut butters
- Beans, Lentils
- Tofu



Cheese and Milk

- Buttermilk,
- Cottage cheese
- Parmesan
- Blue cheeses
- Feta cheese
- Processed cheese slices
- Cheese spreads

- Milk
- Cream cheese
- Soft plain goat cheese
- Brie
- "No salt added" cottage cheese
- Block (hard) cheese such as Swiss, cheddar and mozzarella



Vegetables

- Canned vegetables and tomatoes
- Frozen vegetables with sauces

- Fresh and frozen vegetables
- "No salt added" canned vegetables
- Unsalted canned/jarred tomato products



**Eat Less
(high in sodium)**

**Better Choice
(low in sodium)**

Pickled Items

- Pickles
- Relish
- Olives
- Sauerkraut



- Cucumbers or other vegetables in vinegar
- Lower sodium pickles (without potassium additive)

Soups

- Canned and packaged soup
- Instant noodles



- Homemade low-sodium soup

**Pre-prepared
(packaged)
Foods**

- Frozen microwave dinners with more than 600 mg of sodium per portion/meal
- Frozen prepared foods
- Canned spaghetti, ravioli or chili
- Packaged macaroni and cheese (Kraft Dinner™)
- Hamburger Helper™



- Frozen microwave dinners with less than 600 mg sodium per portion/meal

Seasonings

- Table salt, sea salt, kosher salt, garlic salt, onion salt, celery salt, seasoning salt such as VegeSal™, Lite salt, Lemon Pepper™ (with salt)
- Meat tenderizers such as Adolph's™
- Flavour enhancers (MSG), Bouillon cubes (OXO™, Bovril™)
- Marmite™, Vegemite™
- Sushi vinegar



- Fresh and dried spices and herbs such as:
 - Garlic, Garlic powder
 - Ginger
 - Onion, Onion powder
 - Pepper
 - Parsley
 - Chives
 - Cilantro
 - Dry mustard
 - Wasabi

**Sauces and
Salad
Dressings**

- Barbecue sauce, steak sauce
- Soy sauce, teriyaki sauce, oyster sauce, fish sauce
- Bottled salad dressings,
- Ketchup, prepared mustard relish
- Canned or bottled salsa
- Sushi vinegar



- Homemade or low-sodium:
 - Sauces
 - Salad dressing
 - Salsa
 - Vinegars

Sodium Increases When Food is Processed!

Cucumber
½ cup = 1 mg



Cucumber
with 1 tsp salad dressing
= 180 mg



Dill pickle
1 medium = 526 mg



Tomato
1 small = 5 mg



Tomato sauce
½ cup = 614 mg



Tomato soup
1 cup = 649 mg



Pork
3 ounces = 56 mg



Bacon
4 slices = 331 mg



Ham
3 ounces = 1124 mg

