



# Eat Less Salt (Sodium) for Your Health

If you have high blood pressure, you can lower it in just a few weeks by eating less salt (sodium). If you also start exercising or being more active, you may need less blood pressure (BP) medication.

Even if you don't have high blood pressure, limiting salt can lower your risk for heart attack or stroke.

## What foods are high in salt?

You may be surprised that Americans' high-salt intake mostly comes from restaurant and processed food. Just one fast food meal contains more salt than you need for the whole day. This means we're loading our bodies with much more salt than we need.

## How much salt do you need each day?

Health experts say adults need 2,300 mg of sodium (salt) or less each day. Most Americans consume 3,500 to 5,000 mg of sodium a day—nearly twice the recommended amount.

Studies show that reducing salt helps people avoid heart disease and stroke and improve their overall health.

## What are you willing to do to eat less salt?

**Eating even a little less salt can bring you big health benefits.**

- Eat out less often. This includes meal delivery and take-out food.
- Cook healthy meals at home. Make extra and have it for lunch the next day.
- Eat nutritious foods, such as vegetables, fruits, whole grains, beans, peas, lentils, fish, chicken, and lean meats.
- Choose fresh or frozen foods instead of processed, packaged, and canned foods as much as possible.
- Cut your salt use in half when cooking. Gradually continue to cut salt until you aren't adding any. Instead, add flavor with herbs, spices, lemon juice, vinegar, balsamic vinegar, garlic, onions, wine, or dry mustard.
- Read food labels before buying packaged foods. Look for the sodium (salt) content listed in Nutrition Facts. Avoid or limit high-salt foods.
- Cut the salt you add at the table in half until you aren't using any. Your taste buds will get used to it in 3 to 4 weeks.

Food	Amount	Average Sodium
<b>Breads, Cereals</b>		
Sliced bread	2 slices	300 mg
Biscuit	1	600 mg
Pancakes	3 (4 inches each)	700 mg
<b>Cheese</b>		
American	1 ounce	270 mg
Cottage cheese	½ cup	440 mg
<b>Condiments</b>		
Salad dressing	2 tablespoons	300 mg
Salsa, bottled	¼ cup	300 mg
Soy sauce	1 tablespoon	1,000 mg
<b>Convenience Foods</b>		
Corn, canned	½ cup	360 mg
Top Ramen	1 package	1,820 mg
<b>Entrées</b>		
Cheese pizza	¼ of 12-inch pizza	785 mg
Chicken pot pie, frozen	8 ounces	890 mg
Chili with beans, canned	1 cup	1,260 mg
<b>Meat Products</b>		
Hot dog	1	510 mg
Lunch meat	1 slice	335 mg
Pork link	1	200 mg

## Additional resources

For more health information, tools, classes, and other resources:

- Search [WellMedicalCenter.com](http://WellMedicalCenter.com)
- Contact your local Health Education Department

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