



Eating the Low Salt Way



Sodium (*salt*) is an important electrolyte which your body uses to function and maintain your internal water balance. When you eat too much salt, your body retains (holds onto) more water than it should, which upsets your body's water balance, raises your blood pressure, and puts extra burden on your heart and blood vessels. Over time, this can lead to the worsening of your heart condition.

By limiting the amount of sodium you eat, you will benefit your health and improve your chronic conditions in a number of ways. This guide will equip you with the tools you need to start and maintain a heart-healthy, low salt diet.

Why Should I Watch My Sodium?

In general, people in the U.S. eat much more sodium (salt) than they should. But why is it important to watch the amount of sodium you eat? It is important, because **the more sodium you consume, the higher your blood pressure becomes.** Certain conditions, such as heart and kidney problems, cause your body to hold onto more sodium than it should, which lead to fluid buildup inside your body. This extra fluid forces your heart to work harder and, over time, can weaken your heart and damage your blood vessels.

So how much sodium should you be consuming in a day? **It is generally recommended that you limit your total daily sodium intake to around 2,000 to 2,400 mg**, but your personal goal should be something that is determined between you and your doctor.

1 teaspoon salt = 2,300 mg of sodium

Where Do I Start?

Sometimes, the thought of following a low sodium diet may seem difficult or even impossible. But fear not! Here are some easy places to start:

- **Take the salt shaker off the dining table.**
- **Start choosing fresh foods when possible.** These products are naturally lower in sodium. Try cutting back on processed (packaged) foods.
- **Adjust your taste buds gradually.** At home, experiment with spices, herbs, garlic, and lemon juice instead of salt.
- **Start looking for low-sodium versions of your favorite foods.**
- **Start checking food labels for sodium content.** Sodium levels of similar foods often vary widely by brand. Try to find foods where each serving size has **no more than 200-300 mg of sodium.**
- **Set a rule for yourself.** When picking entrees or main food items, allow yourself no more than one food item with more than **500 mg** of sodium.

What Ingredients Should I Avoid?

Did you know: **Foods do not have to taste salty to have a lot of sodium!** Steer clear of any products with these ‘hidden sodium’ ingredients:

- ✗ Sodium chloride or NaCl
- ✗ Monosodium glutamate (MSG)
- ✗ Baking soda and baking powder
- ✗ Disodium phosphate
- ✗ Anything with “sodium” or “Na” in its name

What Foods Should I Limit?

The best way to reduce sodium is to avoid prepackaged, processed, and prepared foods, which tend to be very high in sodium. Some examples of these foods include:

- ✗ Potato chips and salted snacks
- ✗ Cold cuts, hot dogs, and cured meats
- ✗ Pizza
- ✗ Frozen dinners
- ✗ Canned soups and vegetables
- ✗ Pickles and olives

What Seasonings Should I Use?



Adobo seasonings
Salt, Lite salt
Sea salt
Kosher salt
Seasoned salt
Soy sauce
Barbecue sauce
Celery salt
Cocktail sauce
Fish sauce
Garlic salt
Generic sauce mixes
Horseradish
Ketchup
MSG
Steak sauces
Taco seasoning
Teriyaki sauce
Worcestershire sauce



Mrs. Dash seasonings
Allspice
Black pepper
Cayenne pepper
Chili powder
Cinnamon
Cloves
Cumin
Curry
Dill
Fresh garlic
Garlic powder
Ginger
Onion powder
Oregano
Paprika
Tabasco sauce
Salt substitute (*with doctor's approval*)

How to Read a Label

1. Start Here

Serving Size: Compare this to the portion size you are eating.

2. Check Calories

4. Limit These Nutrients

5. Get Enough of These Nutrients

Nutrition Facts	
Per slice (35 g)	
Amount	% Daily Value
Calories 85	
Fat 1 g	2%
Saturated 0.5 g + Trans 0 g	3%
Cholesterol 0 mg	0%
Sodium 150 mg	6%
Carbohydrate 15 g	5%
Fibre 3 g	13%
Sugars 2 g	
Protein 3 g	
Vitamin A 0%	Vitamin C 0%
Calcium 6%	Iron 15%

3. %DV Guide

- 5% or less is **LOW**
- 20% or more is **HIGH**