

Promotion of low-sodium salt

WHAT IS IT?

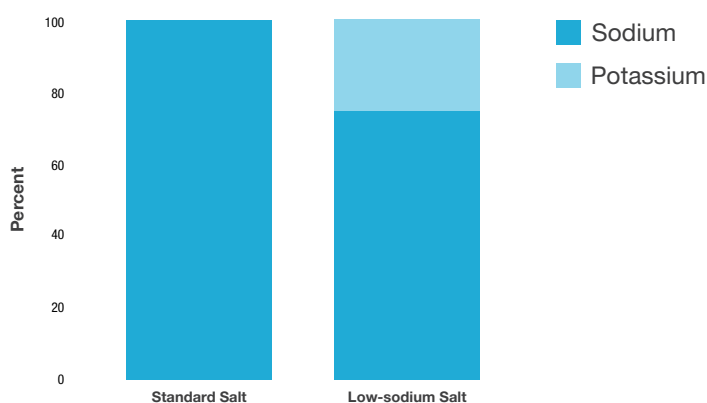
Low-sodium salts are salts in which up to 25% of the sodium chloride (the harmful ingredient in salt) has been replaced with potassium chloride. A similar approach can be applied to condiments such as soy and fish sauce.

Promotion of low-sodium salt may be done as part of a general campaign for salt reduction.

Ideas for promotion include:

- Advertisements paid for by companies that make low-sodium salt
- Public health campaigns around low-sodium salt, including traditional media, social media and community mobilization
- Product placement and promotion in stores
- Subsidies to equalize price between low-sodium salt and standard salt

DIFFERENCE IN COMPOSITION BETWEEN REGULAR SALT AND LOW-SODIUM SALT



RATIONALE

- In many countries, most salt in the diet is added during cooking or at the table
- Initiating and maintaining long-term behavior change related to food is difficult, so making changes to foods before consumers purchase them provides the most sustainable way to reduce salt consumption
- In addition to decreasing sodium intake, using low-sodium salt increases potassium intake, which reduces blood pressure and helps prevent CVD²
- Low-sodium salts can be used by restaurants and packaged food companies, in addition to home cooks
- While there is some risk to people with advanced kidney disease, the benefits far outweigh the risk and can be mitigated through provider and consumer education³

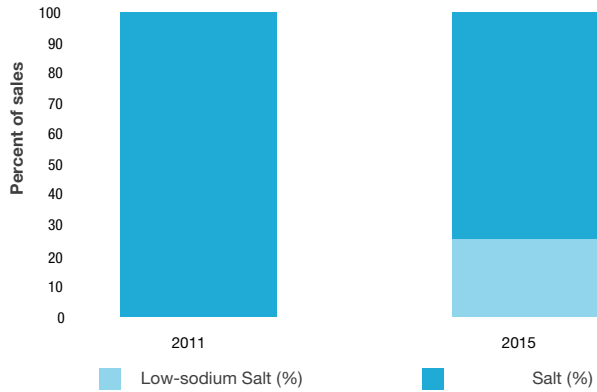
HOW TO IMPLEMENT

1. Assess current landscape:
 - Determine availability of low-sodium salts; major companies and brands
 - Estimate market share of low-sodium salts compared to overall salt market, using industry data
 - Assess consumer knowledge, attitudes and behavior toward salt and low-sodium salt and their impact on health
 - Evaluate provider knowledge, attitudes and behavior toward salt and low-sodium salt
2. Consider complementary media campaign, including social media strategies and a strategy to ensure media coverage
3. Engage advocates, scientists, physicians and other civil society leaders to make the case to government and the public
4. Choose method(s) with large scale, sustainable impact:
 - Encourage or require industry action: promote low-sodium salts
 - + Work with grocery store associations and/or regulators to ensure prominent placement of low-sodium salts and an adequate supply
 - Subsidize low-sodium salt
 - + Determine level of subsidy needed to increase purchase of low-sodium salt
 - + Conduct economic analysis including costs and benefits of low-sodium salt subsidies
5. Monitor change in low-sodium salt purchases over time using industry and other data

WHAT IS NEEDED

- Government leadership with commitment to convene industry, medical community leaders, and others to encourage promotion of low-sodium salt
- Industry engagement
- Communications materials to share with press, on a website, and on social media
- Staff to conduct initial assessments and monitor progress
- Funds for a subsidy
- Funds for development, placement, and evaluation of media campaigns

SALES OF LOW-SODIUM SALTS INCREASED DURING THE SHANDONG PROVINCE'S SMASH INITIATIVE (SOURCE: UNPUBLISHED DATA)



WHERE HAS THIS BEEN IMPLEMENTED

- Trials have mainly been conducted in China, one in the Netherlands; one community trial used both promotion and subsidization of salt substitutes.³
- As part of the SMASH project in China's Shandong province, the salt industry promoted the use of low sodium salt and use increased from <1% of salt purchased to ~25% over 5 years (unpublished data)
- In 2010, the Beijing government strengthened the supply chain for low-sodium salt and subsidized its use by adding an extra 75g for free to 400g packages available in many grocery stores.⁴