

Top Tips for Sodium Reduction

High salt intake contributes to high blood pressure and heart disease, which is the leading cause of death in the U.S., accounting for almost 700,000 deaths in 2020.¹

Americans consume an average of 3400 mg of sodium (the harmful substance in salt) each day, which is much higher than recommended limit of 2300 mg set by the 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans.² The majority of salt intake in the U.S. comes from restaurant and packaged foods,^{3,4} with bread, processed meats, seasoning/sauces, and dairy products (e.g., cheese) being some of the major sources.⁴

Reducing your salt intake is an effective to lower your risk for high blood pressure, heart attacks, and strokes. Keep these tips in mind when shopping for groceries, cooking and eating at home, and dining out to help limit your salt intake and stay healthy.

While Shopping



1. Check nutrition labels on packaged food. The Nutrition Facts label tells you how many milligrams of sodium each serving contains and how much that contributes to the daily recommended limit. Choose the product with the lowest amount of sodium. Be aware that serving sizes may differ between products, so keep that in mind when comparing sodium per serving.
2. Choose 'low-sodium' or 'no sodium added' products.
3. Opt for fresh poultry, fish and lean meat rather than canned, smoked or processed types, which are higher in sodium.
4. When purchasing salt, opt for 'low-sodium salt,' which replaces a portion of sodium in salt with alternative minerals such as potassium*, rather than regular table salt (sodium chloride).

While Dining Out



1. Limit how often you eat out at restaurants. Restaurant meals tend to be very high in salt!
2. Restaurants are required to provide nutrition content upon request. Ask your server for this information before you order and select a lower sodium meal.
3. When dining out, you can ask restaurants to limit or not add salt to your meal.
4. Restaurant meals tend to be very salty. Taste your dish before adding salt, sauces or other condiments and ask for sauces on the side.
5. Restaurant portions are often huge! Ask for a to-go box and set half of your meal aside even before you take the first bite.

While Cooking and Eating at Home



1. Eat more fresh fruits and vegetables and reduce your consumption of pre-packaged, processed foods.
2. Use more herbs, spices, acidic ingredients (lemon juice, vinegars) and other low-sodium or sodium-free ingredients to replace salt and add more flavor to your meals.
3. Be sure to rinse canned vegetables and beans before adding to your meal (especially if you can't find 'low-sodium' or 'no-sodium added' options). The liquid they're stored in tends to be very high in added salt.
4. Gradually reduce the amount of salt in your recipes when preparing meals at home.
5. While you're cooking, taste food before adding a little bit of salt at a time. You need less than you think to add flavor.
6. Take salt and salty sauces (e.g., soy sauce, fish sauce, tomato sauce, etc.) off the table when you're eating—you'll be less likely to reach for them.

References

1. Ahmad FB, Anderson RN. The leading causes of death in the US for 2020. *JAMA* 2021;325(18):1829-1830.
2. Services UDoAaUDoHaH. Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2020-2025. 9th ed. www.dietaryguidelines.gov, 2020.
3. Musicus AA, Kraak VI, Bleich SN. Policy progress in reducing sodium in the American Diet, 2010 - 2019. *Annual Review of Nutrition* 2020;40:407 - 435.
4. Anderson CA, Appel LJ, Okuda N, et al. Dietary sources of sodium in China, Japan, the United Kingdom, and the United States, women and men aged 40 to 59 years: the INTERMAP study. *J Am Diet Assoc* 2010;110(5):736-45.

*There are some concerns that use of potassium-based salt substitutes in individuals with chronic kidney disease may result in adverse effect from hyperkalemia, such as increased risk of arrhythmias and sudden cardiac death. Consult with your physician before purchasing this product if you have been told to limit your potassium intake.