

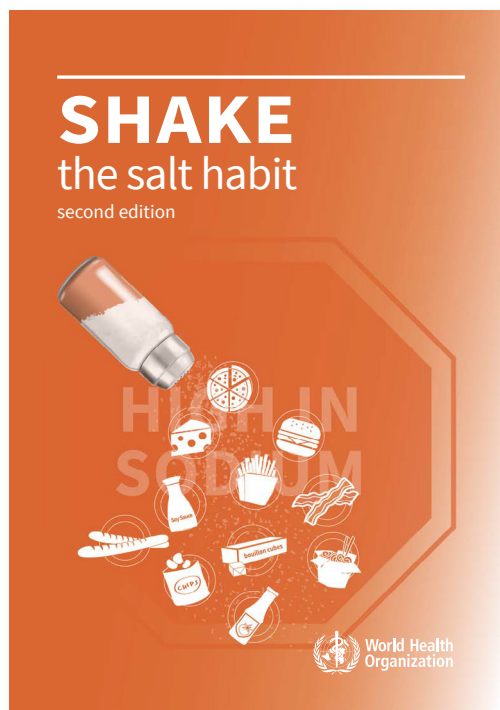


# SHAKE the salt habit - second edition

## Evidence-based, practical guidance for reducing sodium intake at scale

Reducing sodium intake is among the most cost-effective public health interventions available. Mandatory, comprehensive sodium reduction policies could lower population intake by more than 20% and prevent millions of cardiovascular disease deaths each year.

## What's new



- ✓ **Clearer format:** new step-by-step roadmap guides countries to plan, execute, and monitor comprehensive policies
- ✓ **Comprehensive, tailored solutions:** to lower sodium in packaged foods, out-of-home meals, and discretionary salt used at home
- ✓ **New recommendations:** on the benefits of lower-sodium salt substitutes and fiscal policies
- ✓ **Deeper dives:** into the importance of mandatory policies, use of consistent nutrient profile models across policies, conflict-of-interest safeguards, and preventing and addressing industry interference
- ✓ **Real-world examples:** of success and lessons learned from countries that have achieved real impact

## Why it matters

[SHAKE the salt habit - second edition](#) identifies the following elements as essential to designing effective food policies that tackle excess sodium in packaged foods, out-of-home meals, and salt added at home:

- ✓ Mandatory, government-led approaches
- ✓ A national sodium reduction target and time-bound plan
- ✓ Alignment with broader nutrition and non-communicable disease strategies
- ✓ Multi-sectoral coordination, with safeguards to protect from industry interference
- ✓ Strong monitoring and accountability

## Recommendations for every policy stage

WHO's [second edition of SHAKE the salt habit](#) provides an easy-to-follow roadmap with the latest evidence that policymakers can use no matter where they are in the policy process:

### 1. Prepare the foundation

Establish a government-led, multi-sectoral working group to assess sodium intake, identify foods high in sodium, and establish baselines for monitoring and evaluation

### 2. Commit to national action

Set a national sodium reduction target, embed sodium reduction in NCD and nutrition strategies, and establish accountability and reporting mechanisms

### 3. Implement policies across the food system

#### Packaged foods

- Food reformulation
- Front-of-package labelling as part of comprehensive food and nutrition labelling
- Food marketing restrictions
- Taxation of unhealthy food

#### Out-of-home foods

- Food procurement and service

#### Salt added at home

- Lower-sodium salt substitutes to replace regular table salt (in appropriate settings)
- Behaviour change communication and mass media campaigns for healthy diets

### 4. Monitor, enforce, and evaluate

Monitor compliance, enforce mandatory policies, and evaluate impact and equity

### 5. Learn, strengthen, and scale

Refine and expand policies based on evidence, strengthen enforcement over time, and share lessons nationally and globally

## Countries making a difference

Countries that act now can **save lives, reduce healthcare costs, and create healthier food environments** when they support their people to consume less salt through salt-specific policies or nutrition policies that incorporate salt reduction. Several countries are already paving the way. Some examples include:

### United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

In January 2026, the United Kingdom implemented strict, nationwide bans on advertising unhealthy foods (high in fat, salt, and sugar) to tackle childhood obesity. The restrictions prohibit such ads on TV before 9pm and paid online advertisements entirely, aiming to reduce children's exposure to unhealthy food marketing. The government estimates that, each year, these new measures will result in:



of childhood obesity



in health benefits<sup>1</sup>

### Finland

Between the 1970s and the 2000s, Finland implemented mandatory sodium labeling on processed foods, public awareness campaigns, the introduction of potassium-enriched salt substitutes, along with voluntary sodium reformulation. During that period, they saw:



in adult salt intake<sup>2</sup>



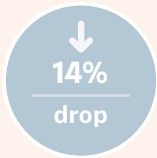
in stroke and coronary heart disease deaths<sup>3</sup>



in life expectancy<sup>3</sup>

### Chile

In 2016, Chile implemented a multiphase set of policies that mandated warning labels, restricted food marketing to children, and banned school sales of foods and beverages high in sugar, sodium, saturated fat or calories. In the first three years, they saw:



in sodium in purchased products<sup>4</sup>



in the nutritional quality of Chilean's food purchases<sup>5</sup>



in children's exposure to harmful food marketing

### South Africa

In 2016, South Africa introduced mandatory sodium reformulation regulations across 13 processed food categories, with targets progressively tightened through 2019. By 2022, they saw:



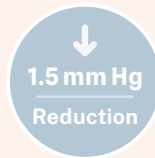
in population sodium consumption (by 0.22-0.23 grams/day)



in sodium content in regulated products



in adults meeting WHO sodium intake guidelines (from 7% -17%)



for every 1g reduction in sodium<sup>6</sup>

## References

- 1 Newton, C. “Here Are the Facts about Our Junk Food Ban.” Department of Health and Social Care Media Centre, UK Government, 6 Dec. 2024, [healthmedia.blog.gov.uk/2024/12/06/here-are-the-facts-about-our-junk-food-ban/](https://healthmedia.blog.gov.uk/2024/12/06/here-are-the-facts-about-our-junk-food-ban/).
- 2 Laatikainen, Tiina, et al. “Sodium in the Finnish Diet: 20-Year Trends in Urinary Sodium Excretion among the Adult Population.” *European Journal of Clinical Nutrition*, vol. 60, no. 8, 2006, pp. 965–970.
- 3 Karppanen, Heikki, and Eero Mervaala. “Sodium Intake and Hypertension.” *Progress in Cardiovascular Diseases*, vol. 49, no. 2, 2006, pp. 59–75.
- 4 Taillie, Lindsey Smith, et al. “Decreases in Purchases of Energy, Sodium, Sugar, and Saturated Fat 3 Years after Implementation of the Chilean Food Labeling and Marketing Law: An Interrupted Time Series Analysis.” *PLOS Medicine*, vol. 21, no. 9, 2024, p. e1004463.
- 5 Dillman Carpentier, Francesca R., et al. “Restricting Child-Directed Ads Is Effective, but Adding a Time-Based Ban Is Better: Evaluating a Multi-Phase Regulation to Protect Children from Unhealthy Food Marketing on Television.” *International Journal of Behavioral Nutrition and Physical Activity*, vol. 20, no. 1, 2023, p. 62.
- 6 Gaziano, Thomas, et al. “Sodium Reduction Legislation and Urinary Sodium and Blood Pressure in South Africa.” *JAMA Cardiology*, vol. 10, no. 4, 2025, pp. 335–342.