

Healthy Eating Guidelines: Lower Sodium (Salt)

Eating foods lower in sodium is an excellent way for you and your family to stay healthy and feel your best. Low sodium eating can lower your risk of high blood pressure, stroke, heart disease, and kidney disease.

Most of the salt (sodium) in our diet is from canned, processed, or convenience foods.

Steps you can take:

1. Choose whole or minimally processed foods using the table below.
2. Read and understand the food label when buying packaged foods.
 - a. Use the Percent Daily Value (%DV) on the Nutrition Facts Table (NFT) to decide if a food has a little or a lot of salt. Take note of the serving size on the Nutrition Facts Table.
5% DV (120mg) or less is “a little”, 15% DV (360mg) or more is “a lot”
3. Add flavor to your meals without adding salt (sodium). Try making your own soups, sauces, and salad dressings.
4. When eating out, look for nutrition information before you order.
 Most restaurants have nutrition information available in store or online.
 Make small changes such as asking for no salt on fries, sauces, gravies, or dressings on the side, and choosing items that are whole or minimally processed.

| Eat more foods lower in sodium | Eat less/avoid foods higher in sodium |
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| <p><u>Vegetables and Fruit</u> Vegetables – canned, no salt added or rinsed well Vegetables – fresh or frozen, not packaged in sauce Vegetable juices – low sodium or salt free Fruits – fresh, frozen, or canned</p> <p><u>Meats and Alternatives</u> Meat, fish, or poultry – fresh or frozen Nuts or seeds – unsalted Peanut butter or other nut butters – regular or unsalted</p> | <p><u>Vegetables and Fruit</u> Pasta or tomato sauce – store bought Pickles and other pickled vegetables Tomato and vegetable juices Instant potato mixes</p> <p><u>Meats and Alternatives</u> Smoked, salted, or koshered meats (sausages, hot dogs, bacon, ham, pickled fish or eggs, canned meats) Deli meats or cold cuts such as bologna, turkey breast, ham Frozen foods such as lasagna, TV dinners, pizza, hamburgers, French fries or breaded meat, fish, or chicken Nuts and seeds – salted</p> |

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| <p>Tuna or salmon – canned, low sodium or rinsed well</p> <p>Legumes (kidney beans, chickpeas, lentils) – dried or canned (rinse well)</p> <p><u>Grain Products</u></p> <p>Crackers – unsalted</p> <p>Popcorn – unsalted</p> <p>Whole grain breads</p> <p>Cereals – cooked</p> <p>Dry cereals with less than 200mg sodium per serving</p> <p>Rice, barley, quinoa, couscous, bulgur, kasha or millet – without sauces</p> <p>Spaghetti, macaroni, pastas</p> <p><u>Milk Products</u></p> <p>Milk, soy milk, yogurt</p> <p>Cheese – hard or block</p> <p>Cottage cheese – low sodium or reduced sodium</p> <p>Ricotta cheese</p> <p><u>Other</u></p> <p>Soups (homemade) or canned/packaged with less than 400mg sodium per serving</p> <p>Herbs, spices for seasoning</p> <p>No Salt Seasonings (Mrs. Dash®)</p> <p>Salad dressings or dips, homemade</p> <p>Ketchup, mustard, relish, BBQ sauce (limit to 1Tbsp per day)</p> <p>Soy sauce – reduced sodium or low sodium</p> | <p><u>Grain Products</u></p> <p>Pancake, waffle, pasta, rice, muffin, and bread mixes</p> <p>Instant hot cereals</p> <p>Crackers – salted</p> <p><u>Milk Products</u></p> <p>Buttermilk</p> <p>Processed sliced cheese, cheese spreads and sauces</p> <p>Cottage cheese</p> <p><u>Other</u></p> <p>Soups or broths – canned/packaged with 400mg or more sodium per serving</p> <p>Bouillons – cubed, powdered, concentrated liquid</p> <p>Steak sauces</p> <p>Snacks such as pretzels, chips, salted crackers</p> <p>Restaurant and take out foods</p> <p>Gravy mixes</p> <p>Garlic salt, onion salt, celery salt, sea salt, meat tenderizers</p> <p>Dips made from dehydrated mixes</p> <p>Bread stuffing – packaged</p> <p>Baked beans – canned</p> |

References: Health Canada, 2019, Sodium in Canada; Dietitians of Canada, 2016, Food Sources of Sodium; Dietitians of Canada, 2012, Healthy Eating Guidelines for Lower Sodium (Salt) Eating; Hamilton Health Sciences, 2006, Tips to help you eat less salt