



Shake the Salt Habit

Most people with high blood pressure (hypertension) are told they need to reduce salt (sodium) in their diet. This means more than putting away the salt shaker—more than 75% of the sodium in the average American diet comes from processed foods.¹ That means you may not even know you're eating it!

The recommended daily amount of sodium is no more than 2.4 grams (2400 mg). That's about 1 teaspoon of salt. This teaspoon includes all the salt and sodium for the day, including what you use in cooking, what's already in food, and what you use at the table.²

How to reduce salt and sodium—some tips²

- Buy fresh, plain frozen, or “no salt added” vegetables
- Use fresh poultry, fish, and lean meat instead of canned, processed, or pre-prepared kinds
- Season with herbs, spices, and salt-free seasonings when cooking
- Don't add salt when cooking rice, pasta, or hot cereal. Instant and flavored types usually have added salt
- Limit how many convenience foods you eat. When you do choose to eat them, find ones that are low in sodium. Frozen pizza, microwave dinners, packaged mixes, canned soups or broths, and salad dressings usually have a lot of sodium. Read the labels carefully
- Rinse canned foods (eg, tuna) to remove some of the sodium
- Buy low- or reduced-sodium versions of foods. Items labeled “low sodium” must contain no more than 140 mg per serving, and “sodium free” or “salt free” foods must have only 5 mg per serving or less¹
- Choose low-sodium dry breakfast cereals



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Low salt doesn't mean low flavor

Herbs, spices, garlic, and onions can add lots of flavor to foods that you might normally flavor with salt. Here are some ideas for spicing up your daily menu.² Start with a small amount and season to taste. As you get more familiar with herbs and spices, expand and experiment to find the ones that work best for you.

Herbs and spices	Use in
Basil	Soups, salads, vegetables, sauces, fish, meats
Cinnamon	Salads, vegetables, breads, snacks
Chili powder	Soups, salads, vegetables, sauces, fish
Cloves	Soups, salads, sauces, vegetables
Dill weed and dill seed	Fish, soups, salads, vegetables
Ginger	Soup, salads, vegetables, meats
Marjoram	Soup, salads, vegetables, beef, fish, poultry
Nutmeg	Vegetables, meats, snacks
Oregano	Soups, salads, vegetables, meats, sauces, snacks
Parsley	Salads, vegetables, fish, meats
Rosemary	Salads, vegetables, fish, meats, poultry
Sage	Soups, salads, vegetables, meats, poultry
Thyme	Salads, vegetables, fish, poultry

References: 1. American Heart Association. Processed foods: where is all that salt coming from? http://www.heart.org/HEARTORG/GettingHealthy/NutritionCenter/HealthyEating/Processed-Foods-Where-is-all-that-salt-coming-from_UCM_426950_Article.jsp. Updated February 18, 2015. Accessed March 19, 2015. 2. National Institutes of Health. Your Guide to Lowering Blood Pressure. http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/files/docs/public/heart/hbp_low.pdf. Published May 2003. Accessed March 19, 2015.

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